

WRESTLING  
INSIDE

**WAS ERNIE LADD FORCED TO  
Inside AMBUSH MIL MASCARAS?**

January 1976

47727 K 75c

# Wrestling

**IS RICK  
FLAIR  
THE  
SECOND  
COMING OF  
BUDDY  
ROGERS?**

**IS THE END  
NEAR FOR  
ANDRE THE  
GIANT?**





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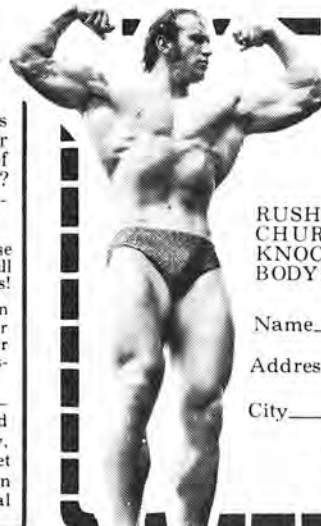
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Inside

# Wrestling

CONTENTS/JANUARY 1976

- 6 **OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS**  
How they stack up in all the major alliances
- 8 **INSIDE WRESTLING PINUP #33**  
A portrait of Kevin Sullivan suitable for framing
- 10 **NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS OF THE WORLD**  
Late reports and news from around the globe
- 12 **SINCERELY YOURS**  
Here's your chance to say what's on your mind!
- 13 **MR. SUZUKI'S "HAIRIEST" MATCH**  
And his most embarrassing!
- 14 **THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF PEN PALS**  
A great way to make new friends
- 18 **A PAIN IN THE NECK**  
A pain neither Ron Fuller nor Bill Miller will ever forget
- 20 **"PUT SOME TALENT ON YOUR COVERS!"**  
The Mongolian Stomper demands to be put on our cover
- 22 **WANTED: A MAN WHO CAN DEFEAT GAGNE**  
For years, no one has been able to unseat the A.W.A. king
- 26 **WRESTLER ON THE BRINK OF SUPERSTARDOM**  
That's high flyin'-Raul Mata
- 29 **EARLY DAWN SHINES IN THE WEST**  
The newest gal sensation is creating havoc for all her opponents
- 30 **IS RICK FLAIR THE SECOND COMING OF BUDDY ROGERS?**  
This rookie is already being compared to the legendary champion
- 33 **"I'M GONNA GET A MANAGER TO CHEAT FOR ME TOO!"**  
Bulldog Brower claims Mighty Igor's manager cost the Bulldog a victory
- 34 **IS THE END NEAR FOR ANDRE THE GIANT?**  
More and more signs point that way
- 37 **WAS ERNIE LADD FORCED TO AMBUSH MIL MASCARAS?**  
Beautiful Bruce Swaysze may have been behind Ernie's dastardly deed
- 40 **THE NIGHT MARK LEWIN NEARLY DROWNED IN HIS OWN BLOOD!**  
The savagery of King Curtis takes its toll on Lewin
- 42 **"POLISH POWER CONQUERS ALL!"**  
Ivan Putski is grilled on the "Hotseat"
- 46 **DOES DICK MURDOCH HAVE MORE GUTS THAN BRAINS?**  
Wrestling a handicap match against Ray Stevens and Larry Hennig makes one think so



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**INSIDE WRESTLING** is published monthly by T.V. Sports Inc., Box 58, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. Single copy price 75¢; annual subscription rate \$9. Not responsible for loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. No part of this magazine can be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.





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# OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

## WORLD WIDE WRESTLING FEDERATION

CHAMPION: BRUNO SAMMARTINO

- 1—IVAN KOLOFF
- 2—BILLY GRAHAM
- 3—BUGSY MCGRAW
- 4—IVAN PUTSKI
- 5—SPIROS ARION
- 6—WALDO VON ERICH
- 7—HAYSTACKS CALHOUN
- 8—BARON SICLUNA
- 9—GORILLA MONSOON
- 10—FRANCISCO FLORES

## AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

CHAMPION: VERNE GAGNE

- 1—BILLY ROBINSON
- 2—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 3—NICK BOCKWINKLE
- 4—PAMPERO FIRPO
- 5—CRUSHER
- 6—BRUISER
- 7—JACQUES GOULET
- 8—SOLDIER LEBOEUF
- 9—GREG GAGNE
- 10—KIM DUK

## MOST POPULAR WRESTLERS

- 1—IVAN PUTSKI
- 2—DUSTY RHODES
- 3—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 4—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
- 5—MIL MASCARAS
- 6—WAHOO MCDANIEL
- 7—PAUL JONES
- 8—MR. WRESTLING II
- 9—MIGHTY IGOR
- 10—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW

## NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

CHAMPION: JACK BRISCO

- 1—HARLEY RACE
- 2—SHOEHI BABA
- 3—DORY FUNK JR.
- 4—PAUL JONES
- 5—THE SHEIK
- 6—TERRY FUNK
- 7—KING CURTIS
- 8—ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER
- 9—ANGELO MOSCA
- 10—RICK FLAIR

## TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE BLACKJACKS
- 2—BRUISER & CRUSHER
- 3—THE MONGOLS
- 4—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
- 5—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
- 6—DICK SLATER & BOB ORTON JR.
- 7—THE MASKED SUPERSTARS
- 8—THE INFERNOS
- 9—THE LEGIONNAIRES
- 10—TONY PARISI & LOUIS CERDAN

## WOMEN

CHAMPION: FABULOUS MOOLAH

- 1—VICKI WILLIAMS
- 2—SUSAN GREEN
- 3—DONNA CHRISTENELLO
- 4—JOYCE GRABLE
- 5—DAISY MAE
- 6—SUSAN SEXTON
- 7—SHEILA SHEPPARD
- 8—LEILANA KAI
- 9—BELLE STARR
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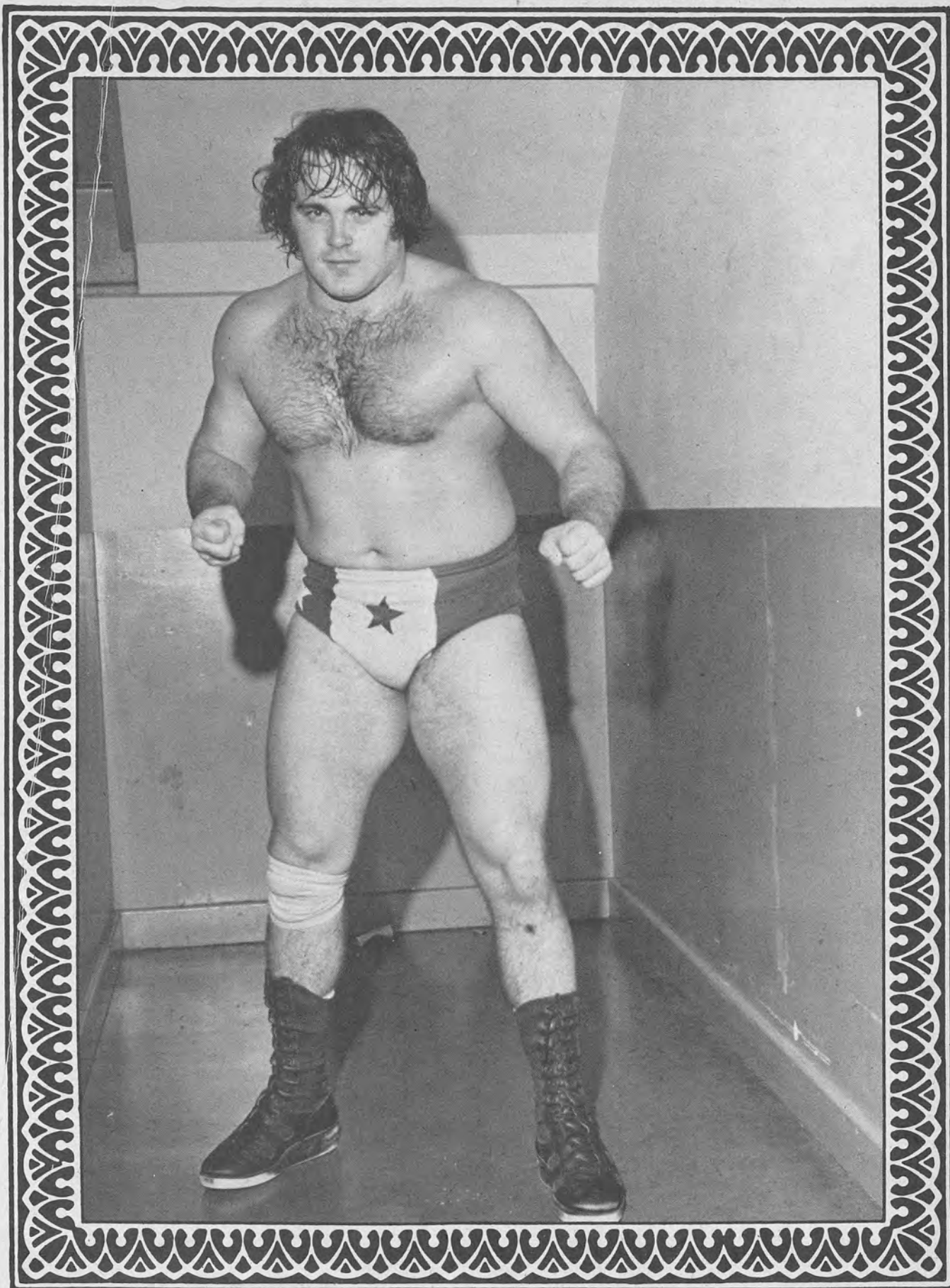
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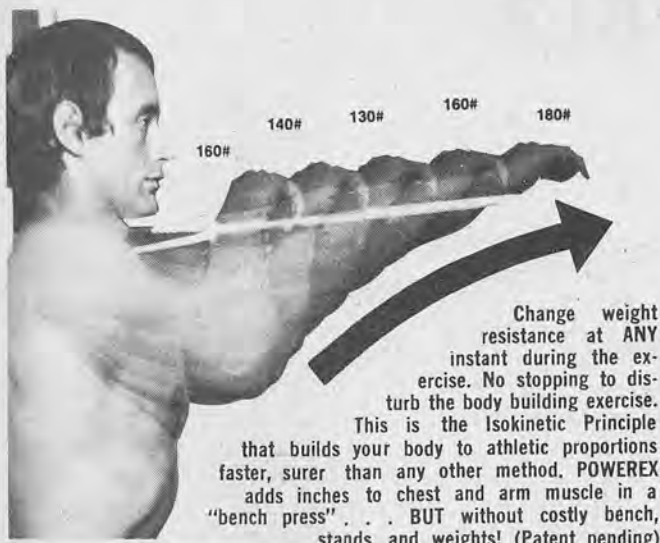
# INSIDE WRESTLING PINUP#33



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● "In complete honesty, I think it is a great exercise program . . . the best one on the market!!!!" — Dave Fuss, IL.

● "You just aren't another rip-off company. You back what you say." — T Roeklein, WI.

● "I've averaged from 2-3" on my legs, arms, and chest — I'm glad that I did invest the money." — Richard Oxer, MT.

● "Enclosed is my money order (for a new Powerex). I know how good it is. I had one and I lost it. I am in several sports and cannot win without Powerex. It is the greatest!" — G Scott, Canada.

● "Arms increased 2½", chest 3", decreased waist 2", and gained 20 lbs. — look and feel a lot better!" — Joseph Moreno, CA.

● "I used to be a singles man — this season I was a home run hitter, and I credit Powerex with this." — T J, AL.

● "The results are just FANTASTIC!" — Richard Lynn, MN.

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# NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS

## MASSACHUSETTS MAT NEWS By Ned Byrne

**F**OR HIS CONTRIBUTION to the American Bicentennial celebration, Bruno Sammartino had his own version of a tea party in Boston when he grappled George "The Animal" Steele.

The revolutionary fighting spirit backed Bruno up as he tore into his opponent in the vicious back alley brawl that took place on the Boston

battled against the team of Blackjacks Mulligan and Lanza. It was a tough, exciting match for Boston fans, as they watched The Blackjacks take some hard beatings from their opponents.

Barrett and DeNucci were able to keep their opponents at bay, using various well executed holds. However, Mulligan and Lanza kept the action lively and fast, with their constant tagging of each other, keeping their opponents guessing who would be wrestling at any minute of the match.

a well-paced, exciting women's match. . . Bugsy McGraw trounced Pat McGinnis.

## CANADIAN ACTION by Rick Young

A bloody, brutal dressing room battle broke out before a scheduled match between N.W.A. kingpin Jack Brisco and King Curtis. It was an unexpected surprise part of a nationwide television broadcast that was supposed to feature a contract signing by the two grapplers, as arranged by promoter Stu Hart.

The brawl started when Curtis uttered a barrage of insults to the champion. Brisco was so enraged he shoved Hart and announcer Ed Whalen to the floor. Then Curtis cut open the champion's head with a stunning blow. Mark Lewin, who was in the next dressing room, had to be called in to break up the battle.

When the actual match got underway, Curtis took immediate control, continually striking Brisco with a foreign object, reopening the cuts in Jack's head. Seeing the sight of his own blood, the champion went wild, grabbed the object from his opponent, and started beating King Curtis' head! However, referee Bob Frank stepped in and ordered Brisco to cease the attack.

After the match resumed, Brisco employed dropkicks, backflips and other holds to daze Curtis. But Jack couldn't keep up the assault. Somehow, Curtis was able to momentarily slip away and mount the ropes for his famed "Hawaiian Splash," but the sly champion moved out of the way and Curtis crashed to the canvas. Brisco was able to retain his title, much to the crowd's delight.

In other action, Hiro Matsudo bested Keith Hart with outside help from Mr. Hito . . . Larry Lane toppled

(Continued on page 62)



*Above: George "The Animal" Steele stumbles outside the ring after being hurled over the ropes by Bruno Sammartino. Right: Jack Brisco is having big trouble both inside and outside the arena.*

mat. The match was made more vicious by George's use of foreign objects, especially wooden chairs. However, Bruno was somehow able to finally overcome the attack. He finished the match by dumping Steele out of the ring, like he was a carton of tea.

In a featured tag team match, Irish Pat Barrett and Dominic DeNucci

At one point, late in the match, both Mulligan and Lanza doubleteamed Barrett. The referee disqualified The Blackjacks and awarded the match to their opponents. However, The Blackjacks retained their title because it cannot be lost due to disqualification.

In other Boston action, Vicki Williams bested Donna Christenello in





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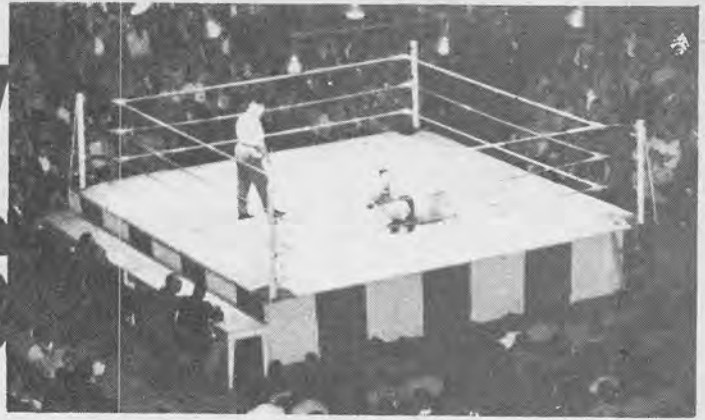
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# SINCERELY YOURS



## ANOTHER OPINION

In response to the letter by Gordon Laidlaw in *THE WRESTLER*/September 1975 about you and your magazines being involved in a plot against John Tolos, I would like to state that all your stories about John make him look like a madman.

So how about a few good stories about John?

GREGG WILLIAMSON  
Los Angeles, California

## BEST IS BUGSY

I have seen good wrestlers come and go. A few months ago, I saw the best wrestler ever to step into a W.W.W.F. arena—Bugsy McGraw.

He is under the guidance of a good manager, Lou Albano. If one man deserves a title shot, McGraw does. Bruno Sammartino is good, but Bugsy may be better in raw strength and power.

If Bugsy gets a chance, "Bugsy's Bombers" of West Reading, Pa. believe he'll be the next W.W.W.F. champion.

SCOTT STAUFFER  
West Reading, Pennsylvania

## MANY THANKS

I would like to thank you very much for the article "Did They Write Off Harley Race Too Soon?" This article only goes to show the magnificence of our wonderful sport.

When an obviously superior wrestler like Harley Race wins a title, loses a title, and then is passed over as a contender for the belt, it proves the abundance of talent in this sport. Although I feel strongly this situation is extremely unfair, and would advise Harley to leave the N.W.A. for a while to show

promoters how important he is, this only proves my point.

Once again, thanks for a great magazine!

CHRIS SLAWECK  
Wayne, Pennsylvania



*Fans are asking for stories in praise of John Tolos (above) instead of condemning the man.*

## HIS OWN MAN

I can't believe Billy "Superstar" Graham could be whining to the fans "My Blood is on Your Hands!" (*INSIDE WRESTLING*/October 1975).

His decision was his own and he should be man enough to take the consequences himself. If it's getting too rough for him, then it's his trouble and not the fans. When he steps into that arena, he's the only guy who can be praised or blamed.

Maybe if Graham paid more attention to wrestling and less to griping, he wouldn't have to blame other people for his tough times.

MIKE CHWAST  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## WELCOME BACK

My friends and I were delighted to read of Yvon Robert Jr.'s comeback ("After Two Years, Yvon Robert is Back!" [*THE WRESTLER*/October 1975]). We were fans of his when injuries made him quit. We're happy to once again cheer his victories.

Yvon has always given fans his best. Any fears that he'd be less aggressive after his lay-off have been dispelled. He's more determined than ever!

Let's have more stories on this exciting and brave young grappler. His story is an inspiration to everyone!

Best of luck, Yvon. We're rooting for you!

JEANINE DURRELL  
Montreal, Canada



*Antonio Inoki (above) is being congratulated for not hiding behind excuses after losing.*

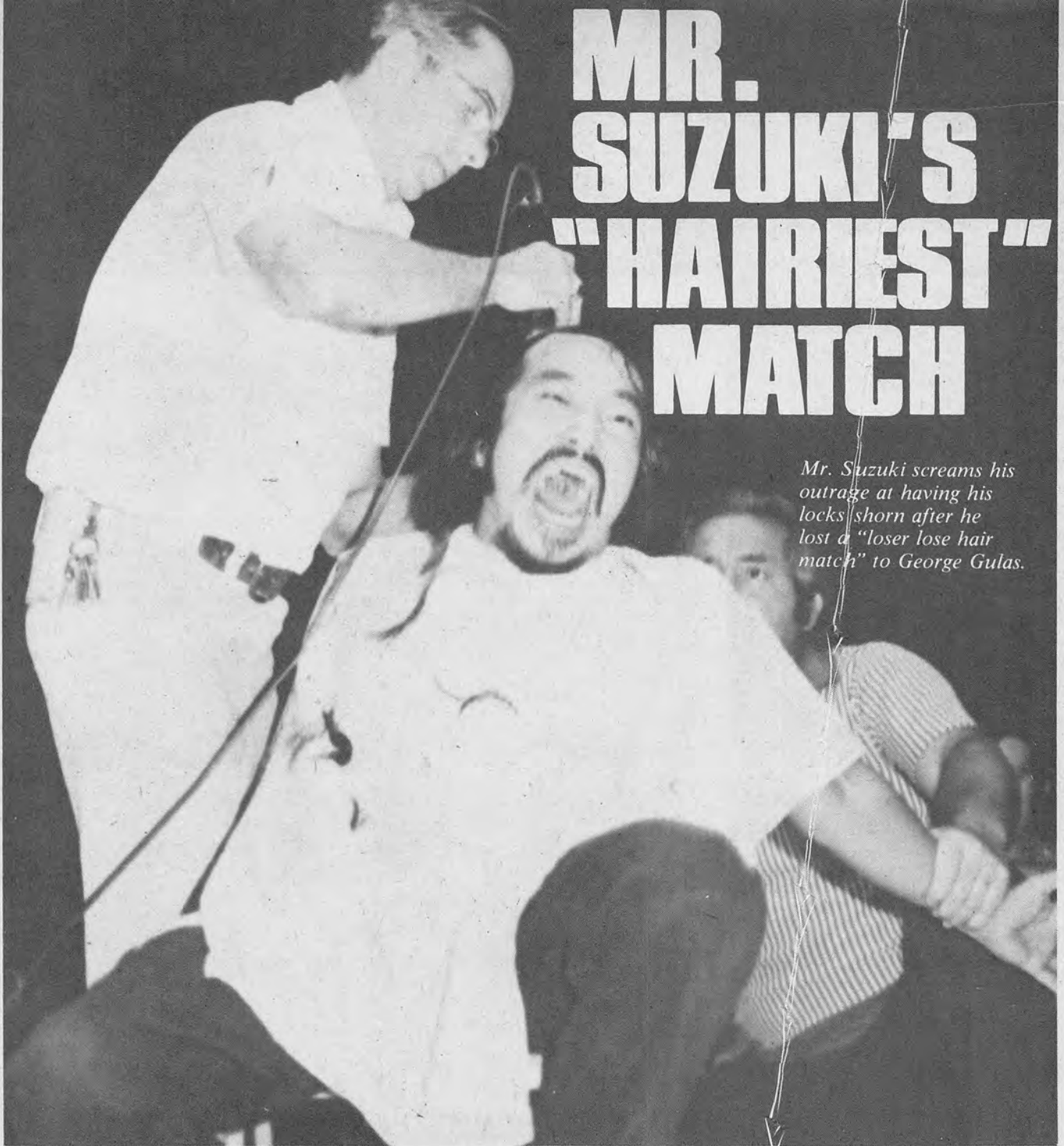
## HONESTY BEST

In professional wrestling, where it seems everyone makes excuses for a loss, Antonio Inoki is a breath  
(Continued on page 60)



# MR. SUZUKI'S "HAIRIEST" MATCH

*Mr. Suzuki screams his outrage at having his locks shorn after he lost a "loser lose hair match" to George Gulas.*



**T**HERE ARE MANY lengths to which a man will go to humiliate another man in the wrestling world. Perhaps one of the most humbling things a grappler can suffer is to have his hair shaved off. Just ask Mr. Suzuki about that—he knows.

"I don't want to talk about it," said the Japanese wrestler, gravely rubbing the bristly stubble left after the razor had done its damage.

But George Gulas was willing to be more talkative. "Suzuki deserved what he got," he said. "When you consider what he did to me, he should have got worse! Next time, I won't let him off so easy."

**The humiliation of losing a hair match has turned many wrestlers into vengeful animals. Perhaps the most savage of these is Mr. Suzuki**

For a long time now, the vicious feud between George Gulas and Mr. Suzuki has been waged, often resulting in matches where the two grapplers came very close to killing each other.

Recently, one of their matches was especially brutal. After it was over, Gulas delivered a special challenge to Suzuki: "If you're half the wrestler you say you are, something which I

strongly doubt, you will meet me in a hair match. If you win, you can cut off my hair. If I win, I'll shave off yours."

Suzuki immediately accepted the dare. "Gulas," the Japanese grappler retorted, "I just hope you have a good wig, because you are going to need it after I shave off those curly locks of yours!" The match was set up, and

*(Continued on page 48)*

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Likes fishing. Andre  
the Giant his favorite.  
Likes good guys. Girls  
for pen pals.



**MIKE STAGE (14)**  
1301 Dulee Drive  
Elwood, IN 46036  
Likes guns. Mike  
Snyder his favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Girls for pen pals.



**SHILA SMITH (14)**  
308 Moore Street  
Crothersville, IN 47229  
Likes all sports. Jack  
Brisco her favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Boys for pen pals.



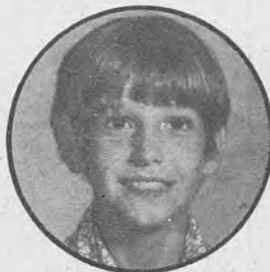
**HARLEN HOSHNIC (8)**  
Dennehotso School  
Kayenta, AZ 86003  
Likes basketball.  
Ricky Romero his  
favorite. Likes  
good guys. Anyone  
for pen pals.



**NORMA RODRIGUEZ (16)**  
93 Astor Street  
Newark, N.J. 07114  
Enjoys drawing. Tony  
Garea her favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Anyone for pen pals.



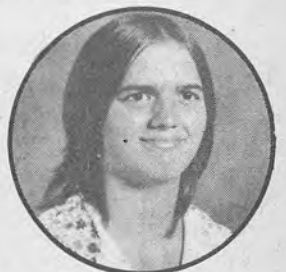
**DALE JONES (14)**  
7817 San Jose Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32217  
Likes motorcycles.  
Dusty Rhodes his  
favorite. Likes  
good and bad guys.  
Girls for pen pals.



**ERIC MOORE (11)**  
Rt. 2 Box 52  
Pelahatchie, MS 39145  
Likes swimming. Bill  
Watts his favorite.  
Likes good and bad  
guys. Girls for PP's.



**BILLY LEE JONES (13)**  
RR 1  
Lost Nation, IA 52254  
Enjoys baseball. Bobo  
Brazil his favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Girls for pen pals.



**PEGGY CROWE (17)**  
Route 4  
Canton, GA 30114  
Likes softball.  
Jack Brisco her  
favorite. Likes  
good guys. Anyone  
for pen pals.



# PALS



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**KENNETH BLACKFORD (18)**  
461 Lineberry Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452  
Enjoys football. Wahoo  
McDaniel his favorite.  
Likes good guys. Anyone  
for pen pals.



**ADELLA ROBINSON (16)**  
4209 Annunciation St.  
New Orleans, LA 70115  
Likes all sports.  
Terry Latham her  
favorite. Likes good  
guys. Boys for PP's.



**GARY SWANSON (13)**  
3 N.W. 8th Street  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
Likes basketball.  
Billy Graham his  
favorite. Likes good  
or bad guys. Anyone  
for pen pals.



**PETE DINON (12)**  
School House Road  
Kennett Square, PA 19348  
Likes football. Bruno  
Sammartino his favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Boys for pen pals.



**SHAWN BURNS (10)**  
733 S. 4th  
Brighton, CO 80601  
Enjoys running.  
Wahoo McDaniel his  
favorite. Likes  
good guys. Boys  
for pen pals.



**JEFF ARNOLD (15)**  
2517 Coolidge Ave.  
Racine, WI 53403  
Likes all sports.  
Dick the Bruiser  
his favorite. Likes  
good guys. Girls  
for pen pals.



**CAROLYN CAUSEY (18)**  
P.O. Box 144  
Laurinburg, N.C. 28352  
Enjoys skating. Jack  
Brisco her favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Anyone for PP's.



**THOMAS BRIDGES (20)**  
6184 Behle Avenue  
Ferguson, MO 63135  
Likes karate. Billy  
Graham his favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Girls for PP's.



**FRANK BOWERS (20)**  
P.O. Box 742  
Ft. Meade, FL 33841  
Enjoys skating. Jack  
Brisco his favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Girls for pen pals.



**KAREN LASSEN (12)**  
726 Valley Drive  
Jonesboro, AR 72401  
Enjoys camping.  
Jackie Fargo her  
favorite. Likes  
good guys. Boys  
for pen pals.



**JOHN MAETTA (11)**  
3 Bay 38th Street  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11214  
Likes model making.  
Bruno Sammartino his  
favorite. Likes good  
guys. Anyone for PP's.



**ROWENA HALL (20)**  
Rt. 6 Box 422  
Muncie, IN 47302  
Likes bowling.  
Dick the Bruiser  
her favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Anyone for PP's.



**MARK SNOW (13)**  
5106 N. 50 Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53218  
Enjoys football.  
Verne Gagne his  
favorite. Likes  
good guys. Girls  
for pen pals.



**ED ROSENBERG (16)**  
7805 Farnsworth Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19152  
Likes bowling. Dusty  
Rhodes his favorite.  
Likes good and bad  
guys. Girls for PP's.



**LOUISE LICKOWSKY (1)**  
2411 Bigler Terrace  
Philadelphia, PA 19145  
Likes art. Andre the  
Giant her favorite.  
Likes good guys.  
Anyone for pen pals.



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# A PAIN IN THE NECK

**B**ILL MILLER AND Ron Fuller each believes the other gives him the biggest pain in the neck.

It started when Ron came sailing into Miller, shoulder first. Ron made a perfect hit into the side of Miller's neck. Bill's head shot back as if a cannon ball had hit it. When he got up off the canvas, he shook his head or tried to.

Many of the muscles in his neck had been strained and some might have been torn. He probably should have quit but Bill Miller is not a man who quits.

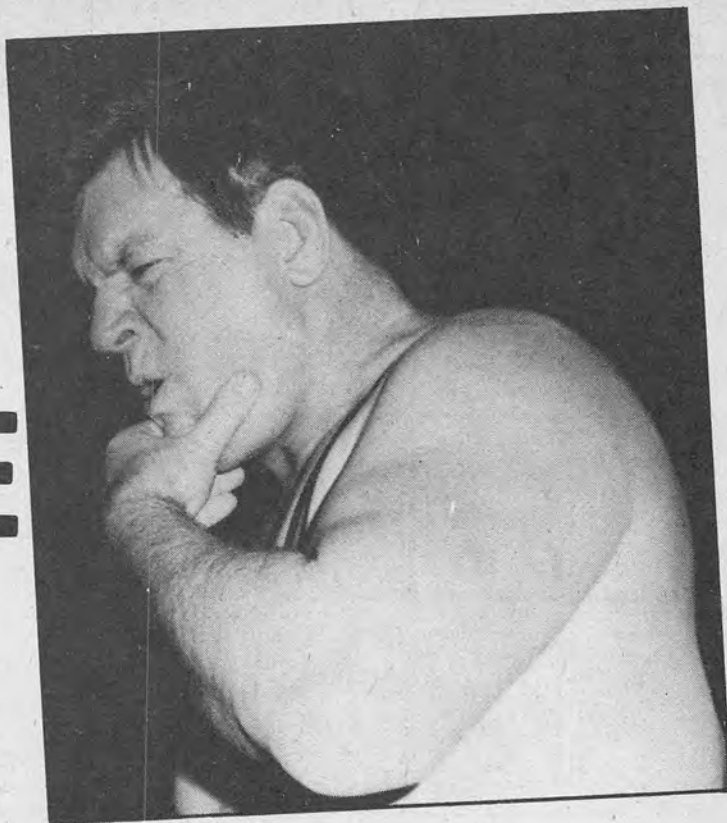
With pain shooting through his neck, Bill stalked Ron. Within a minute of his injury, he grabbed Ron by the arm and slammed Fuller's head hard into his own chest. Soon, both men had necks in identical conditions.

But Ron isn't a quitter either. They wrestled the best they could for a little while until the buzzer ended their agony.

"I was going to quit," Bill said after the match as his trainer worked on his neck. "but I saw him glowering at me, defying me to continue. Well, when he puts it like that, I have to show him I'm able to take anything he can dish out."

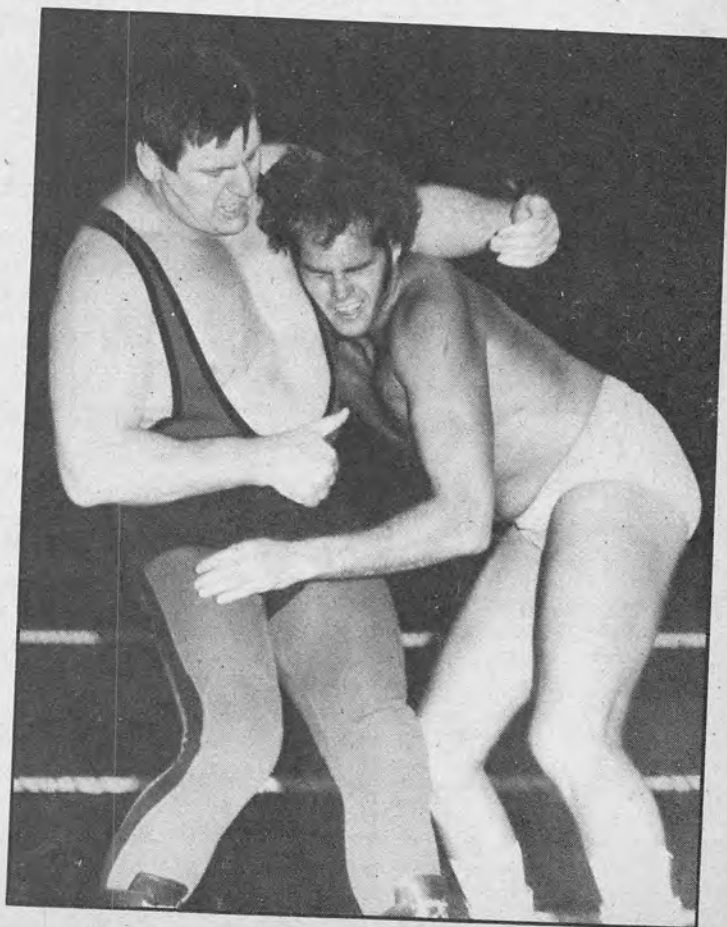
As for Ron, he replied, "I couldn't stop after he received the same injury and continued. I had to prove I was just as stubborn as he was."

The two proud, stubborn men left the building later wearing neck braces! □



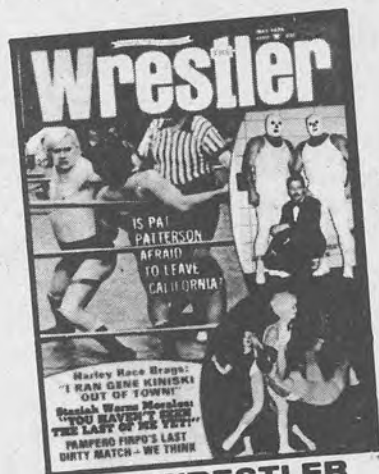
**Ron Fuller and Big Bill Miller never did care for each other. Now the two appear to be starting a blazing feud!**

*Bill Miller tries to move his neck after Ron Fuller has slammed into it (top). It's agonizingly painful but he can't give Ron the satisfaction of quitting. So he snaps Ron's neck (right) just to make things even. It is even more painful for both wrestlers as they continue.*





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# "PUT SOME REA ON YOUR COVE

**H**ELL KNOWS NO fury like a wrestler scorned. Especially when that wrestler is The Mongolian Stomper.

Stomper is furious because his picture has never appeared on the cover of magazines like *THE WRESTLER* and *INSIDE WRESTLING*. And when full color portraits of grapplers like Andre the Giant are displayed on the covers of those publications, The Mongolian Stomper really goes into a rage.

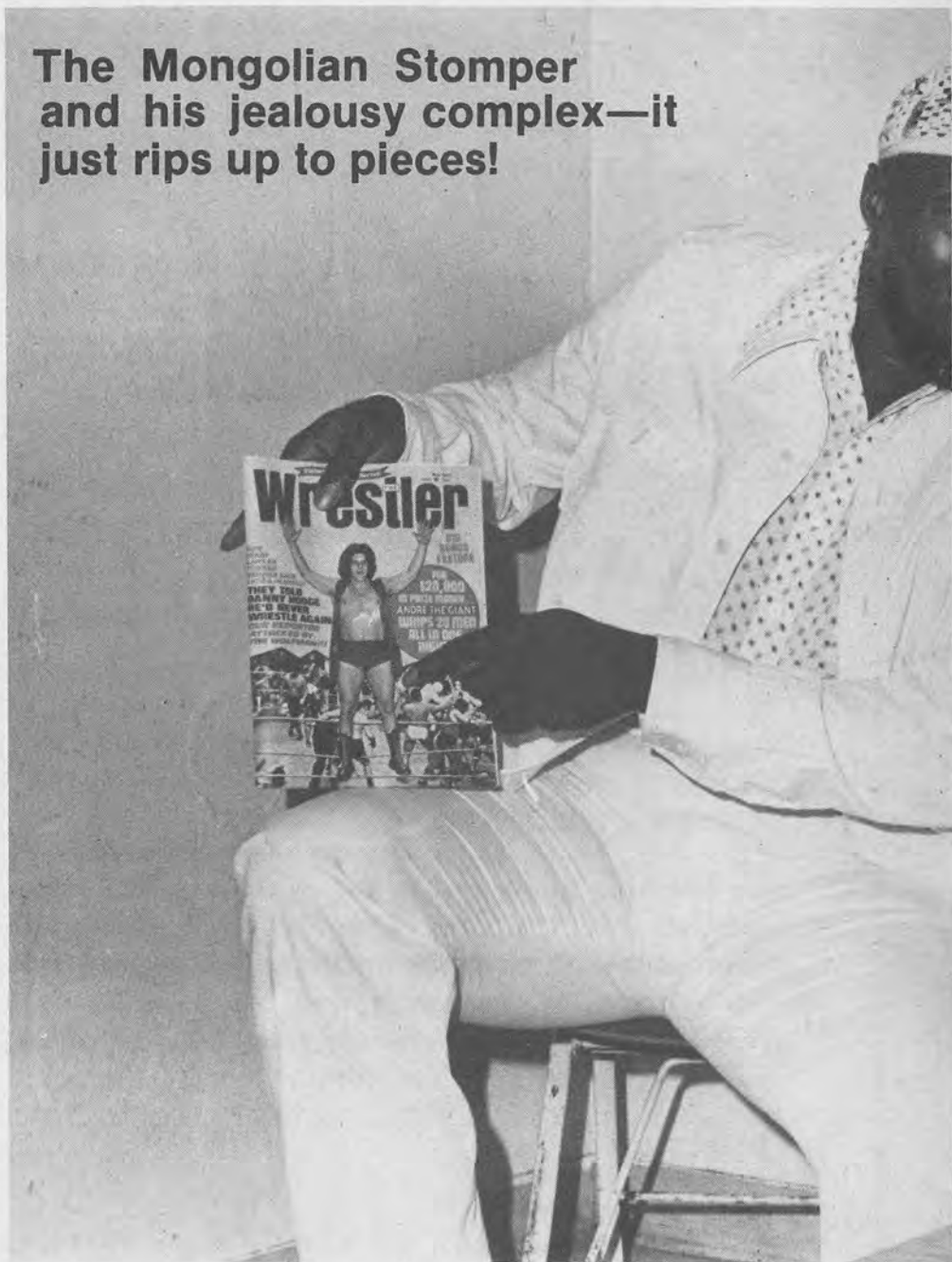
Through his manager/interpreter Bearcat Wright, Stomper told us, "I am much better than that overblown big-boy. I can beat him in a wrestling arena anytime. Just let me at him. I'll show you guys in the press who should be on the cover!"

After Stomper finished his short tirade, Wright added, "If you ask the fans, they'll tell you who the greatest wrestler is—The Mongolian Stomper. It seems to us it is about time you guys told the world about the talents of my wrestler, rather than those of Andre the Giant, whose abilities can't even begin to compare with Stomper's. Magazines like *INSIDE WRESTLING* and *THE WRESTLER* are just afraid to show how good my man here is!"

This whole incident began after one of our reporters was showing Stomper an issue of *THE WRESTLER*. All the Mongolian had to see was he wasn't featured on the cover of that issue. He began screaming and yelling in his native Mongolian. Oaths poured out of his mouth, cursing the publication for not printing a full color shot of him on the cover. He started going berserk, running up and down his dressing room, throwing wild punches into empty air.

Our reporter hid for cover, and Bearcat Wright called in the special police to calm The Mongolian Stomper down. It took four officers to restrain the grappler. Thirty minutes later, Bearcat coaxed our reporter out

**The Mongolian Stomper and his jealousy complex—it just rips up to pieces!**



of hiding and tried to resume the interview.

As soon as the reporter reappeared, Stomper started getting angry again. This time, however, the special police were in the room, and Bearcat stayed by his wrestler's side to keep the peace.

Our reporter tried again to show Stomper the copy of *THE*

*WRESTLER*. This time, Stomper grabbed the issue and tore it in half, uttering some phrase in Mongolian.

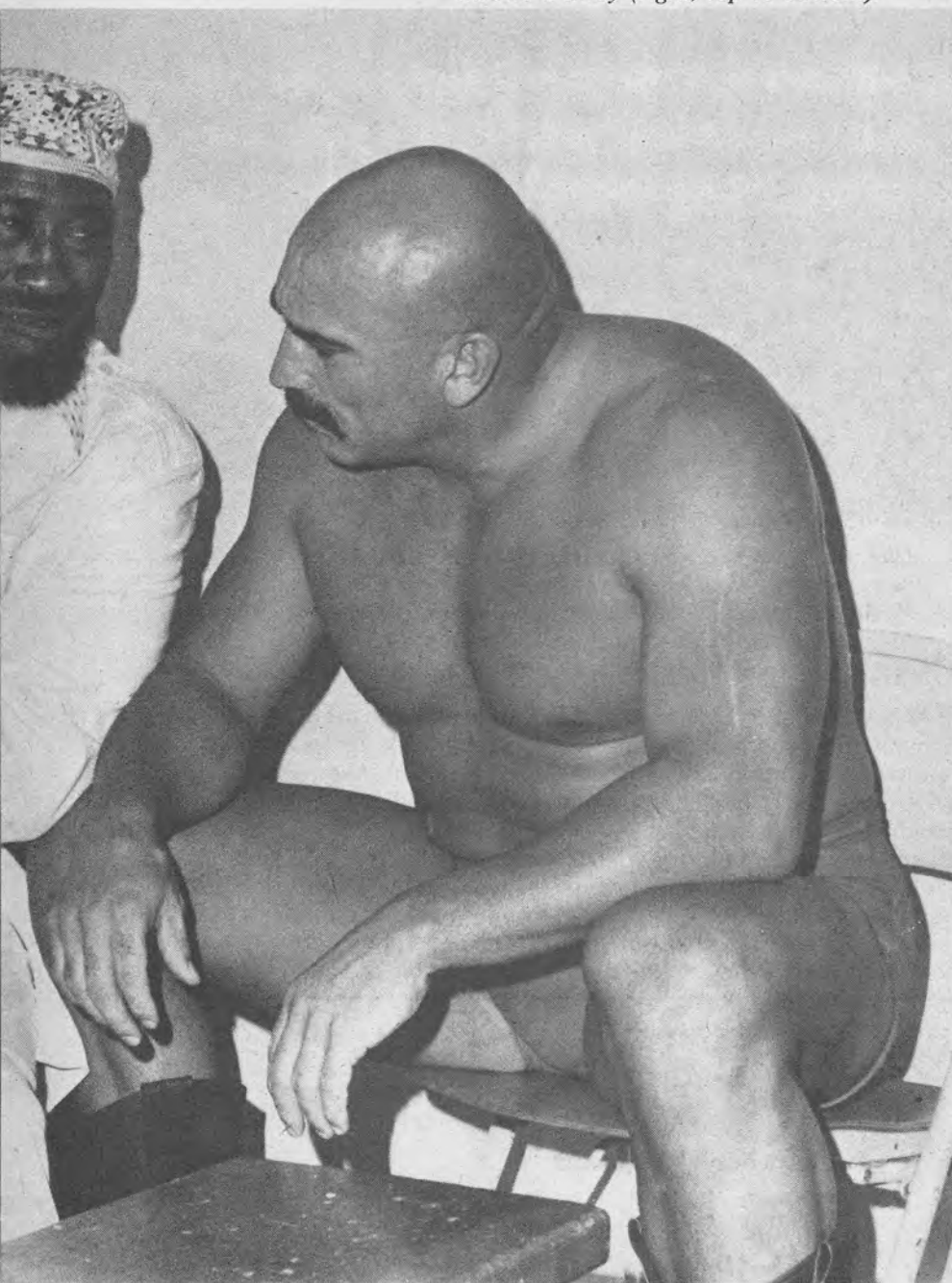
"He says," Bearcat told us, "that this is the wrong cover for the magazine. He says his picture should be on it."

The Mongolian Stomper took what remained of the magazine and began ripping at it with both hands, leaving



# L TALENT RS!"

*Bearcat Wright shows his wrestler, The Mongolian Stomper, THE WRESTLER (below). Enraged at not finding a photo of himself on the cover, Stomper grabs the magazine, rips it to shreds, then throws it away (right, top to bottom).*

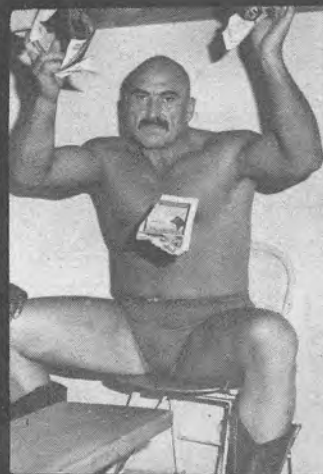
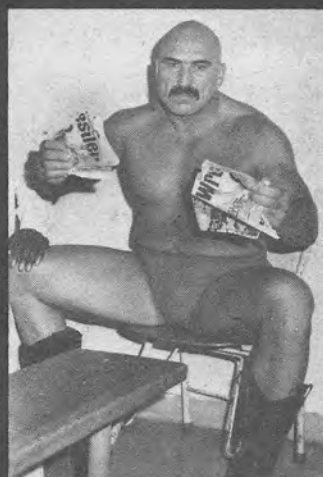
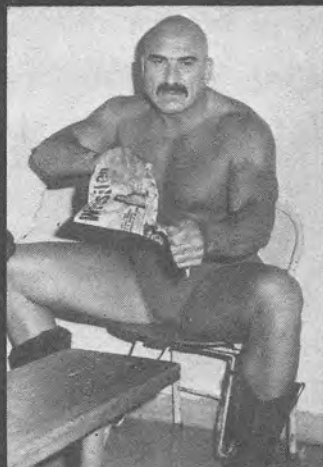
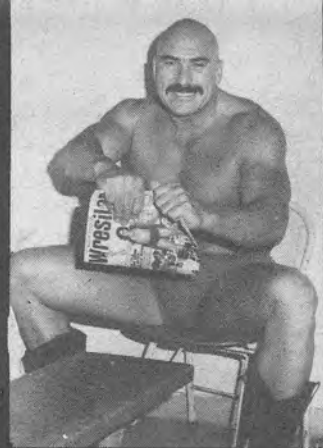


the entire publication looking like a pile of confetti on the floor. When he saw what he had done, he screamed a wild Mongolian curse.

"The Mongolian Stomper hereby vows," translated Bearcat, "that he will rip up every copy of those magazines with Andre's picture on the cover. He says he is the greatest grappler of all

time, and you better start publicizing the fact, or else!

"You guys should put real talent on your magazine covers—The Mongolian Stomper! The Stomper can beat any wrestler you've ever pictured on the front cover. The Stomper is the greatest grappler ever!"



# WANTED



*Dick the Bruiser (above left) and Baron Von Raschke (left) are two great grapplers who have challenged Verne Gagne for his title. Verne has also had some tough times with the desperate and raging Billy "Superstar" Graham (above). Although these three are among the finest wrestlers, they've been unable to defeat Verne Gagne!*



**I**N EVERY SPORT there are dynasties, men or teams who retain the championship for years with a continual display of excellence. In wrestling, Verne Gagne is such a man. It seems as if "A.W.A. champion" has become part of his name.

Only the bravest and most confident men dare to challenge a

dynasty. For them to attempt what so many others have failed requires a faith in themselves which is possessed by only a few great grapplers. They accept the challenge for the rewards are so great. The man who ends the championship reign of Verne Gagne will instantly become a sports immortal.

# A MAN WHO CAN DEF VERNE GAGNE



---

Is there a man so great and so determined he can take the A.W.A. title from Verne Gagne? That's the question promoters have been trying to answer for years!

---

Almost as much as the wrestlers want to defeat Gagne, promoters want to find challengers for Verne's crown. It's becoming more and more difficult to find a man who fans consider worthy competition for Gagne.

"I don't think I'm bragging," one promoter opined, "when I say the A.W.A. has the best wrestlers anyone can find. We also have the greatest champion. Other titles may change, but Verne remains the guy who's unbeatable. Do you have any idea how hard it is to find opponents for a guy who's unbeatable?"

"It's getting harder and harder to find wrestlers who the fans are willing to believe can beat Verne—he's that extraordinary! And if we

*Verne happily kisses his title belt after a particularly hard defense. No matter how tough the opponent, however, Verne always retains his championship!*

**EAT**



find a guy who the fans will accept, it's murder trying to convince him to take a match against Gagne.

"Guys who will satisfy both requirements can be counted on the fingers of two hands. They have to really lust for glory and have enormous pride in their skills. And they can't be afraid of failure. It takes a very stubborn man to go after Verne Gagne's title."

Almost everyone agrees there's only a handful of men who can be considered valid challengers to Verne's title. One of these is Billy Robinson, who has grappled Gagne many times, though he has never won a clear-cut victory over the champion.

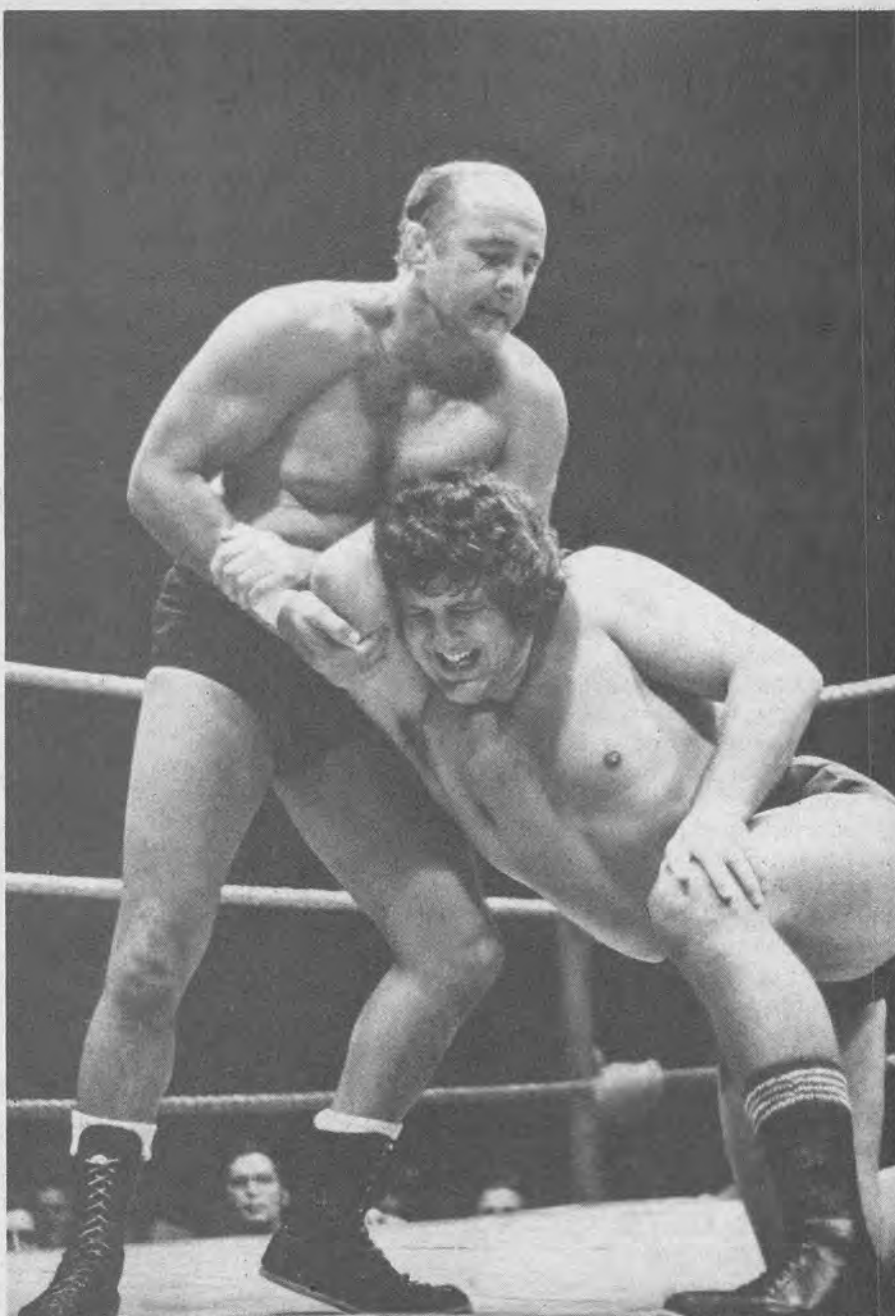
"Gagne is good," says Billy, "and it's only a matter of time before I take his title away, because I know I am better!" Wrestling experts are divided on whether or not Billy can make true his boast. While one will point to Robinson's expert skills on the mat, another will point out the grappler's apparent lack of complete control when he encounters Gagne. "Verne knows Billy's weakness," says the expert, "and that could keep the title from him."

The vicious Horst Hoffman has a good shot at taking the crown from Gagne. His dirty tactics are infamous in wrestling circles, and he might be just lucky enough to score with an illegal hold or punch on Verne. So far, however, Verne has been able to overcome Hoffman's evil tactics and win their matches.

One wrestling expert has said, "Gagne is too good for Hoffman, no matter what Horst may try in the arena. Verne is quick and adept, and he can slip out of any of Hoffman's illegal maneuvers. No, Hoffman is no match for Verne Gagne."

However, another expert feels differently. "To me," he says, "the prospect of Verne Gagne being defeated by Horst Hoffman seems very probable. Though Gagne is a champion, and therefore used to all kinds of different wrestling styles—both scientific and illegal—Hoffman is crafty and sly. But Hoffman has made many tactical errors in his matches with Gagne and therefore lost. If he would stop making so many mistakes at the wrong times, he would have a good shot at the championship."

Together Ray Stevens and Nick Bockwinkle were once tag team



*Above: Against Billy Robinson, Verne tortures his opponent with a devastating armbar as he thwarts Billy's title hopes. Below: Nick Bockwinkle learns why Verne Gagne has been the A.W.A. champion for so long!*

champions. They are cruel, yet extremely talented grapplers. Both are potential contenders for Gagne's title.

"I could take that title from him," says Stevens, "if I could get another shot at him. He wrestles so rarely nowadays. While he's protecting his title, he's depriving me of a shot at it. Since the last time I had a match with him, which has been some time now, I've learned a whole bunch of new tactics which







*Above: Ray Stevens has a tough battle against Paul Christy before he earned a title shot against Verne. Below: Nick Bockwinkle doesn't hesitate to choke Gagne mercilessly for the chance of gaining the belt. Even illegal tactics aren't enough to defeat champ Gagne!*

I'm positive Verne could not combat. I just want to try them now."

What Stevens fails to remember is that before his previous matches against Gagne, he also tried some new techniques, but these proved to be inadequate against Verne's prowess. But, like he said, some time has passed between now and their last match. Stevens might indeed have a new method for overcoming Gagne.



The experts are puzzled by Ray's partner's chances for winning the title. Nick Bockwinkle displays many talents as Ray's tag team partner, but his performance as a single is uneven. He has come close to winning several title matches, only to find himself disqualified at the last minute.

A Bockwinkle victory over Verne seems possible, if he can learn to keep some of his more questionable tactics in check and not get himself disqualified. He still has to improve, though, before he can beat Gagne.

Pampero Firpo is considered to be the top contender for the title by one wrestling expert. "With Firpo's reformation from dirty tactics to scientific wrestling, he has a definite shot at unseating Verne Gagne. His strength and natural ability seem to me to be what is needed to defeat Gagne."

He may be right. Whenever Pampero has wrestled Gagne in the past, he has used his dirty tactics to try to overcome the champion but was unsuccessful. However, now that he's cleaned up his style, the "new" Pampero Firpo is looking good. Whether the reformed grappler can beat Gagne remains to be seen.

Some of the experts polled pointed to either Crusher or Bruiser, two great veterans of the wrestling scene, to be potential opponents of Gagne for the championship. They point out both Crusher and Bruiser have tried and true techniques for defeating opponents which Gagne might not be able to counteract.

But other experts claim neither Crusher nor Bruiser are really the type of opponent needed to defeat Verne. Both men have a history of not changing their styles to fit their opponent of the moment, and this could prove disastrous in a title match against Gagne.

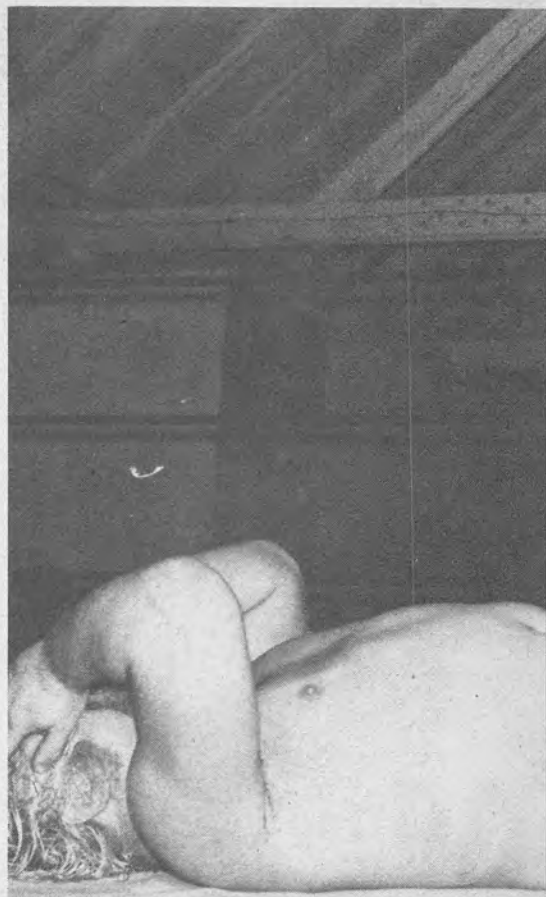
All the experts agree that it will be some time yet before anyone can defeat this great champion. All the top contenders still need to improve some aspect of their styles before they have a shot at the title. Even then, they might not necessarily triumph over Verne.

At this rate, it may take years before someone comes along who can beat the champion. And that contender may be someone who is not even wrestling professionally yet. Whoever he is, he will have to be one hell of a wrestler! □

# RAUL MATA--



*Raul Mata (left), a superbly conditioned athlete, can win bouts either in the air or on the mat, as Moondog Mayne is quite unhappy to learn (right).*



**H**IS FLYING LEAPS have become legendary among west coast wrestling fans, but his fame is spreading all around the world. Reports are coming in from everywhere that fans want to see Raul Mata's flying antics. And the demand is still growing.

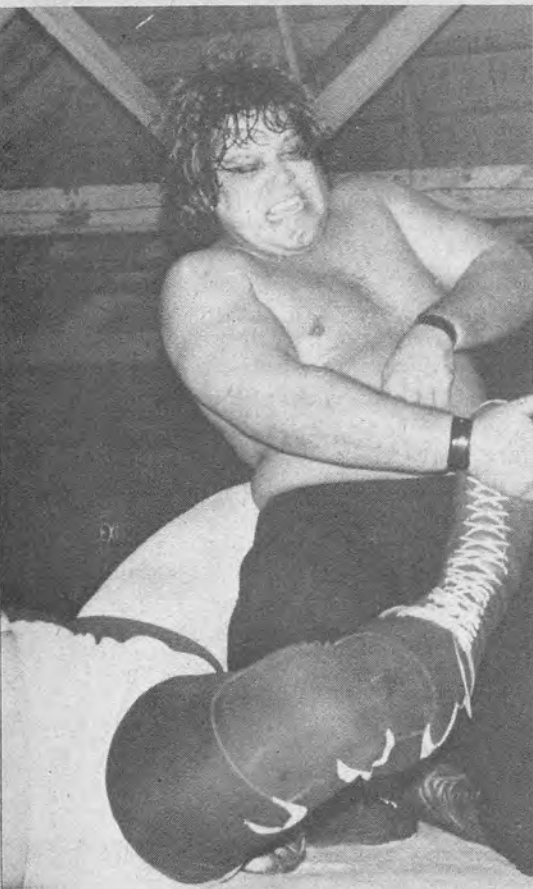
With the gracefulness of a falcon and the power of a hawk, Raul has been known to defeat his opponents by his flying leaps across the arena. In some matches, he spends more time in the air than on the ground!

"I can't help admiring that man," said Pat Patterson. "He's quick, strong and talented."

"I particularly remember one night when we wrestled together as a tag team. That man would easily slip out of a hold and jump to the ropes. Mata sat like a bird perched on a high wire, his body poised for

# WR BRINK OF S





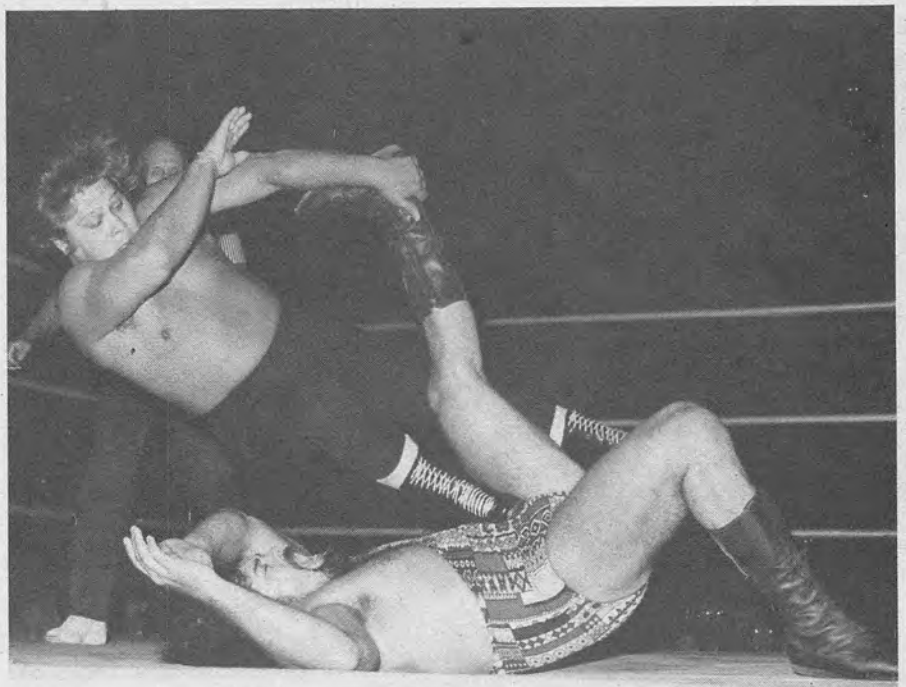
*Right: Mata's strong legs encircle Fritz Von Goering in a reverse leg scissors. Raul is able to use his strong legs to a very fine advantage. Below: The Beastman yells in pain as he feels as if his leg is about to be broken by a leg stretcher.*



some sort of action. Well, one of our opponents charged towards him, thinking he could topple Raul from his precarious position. Just as he was about to push him over, Mata sprang from the ropes, and flew at him!

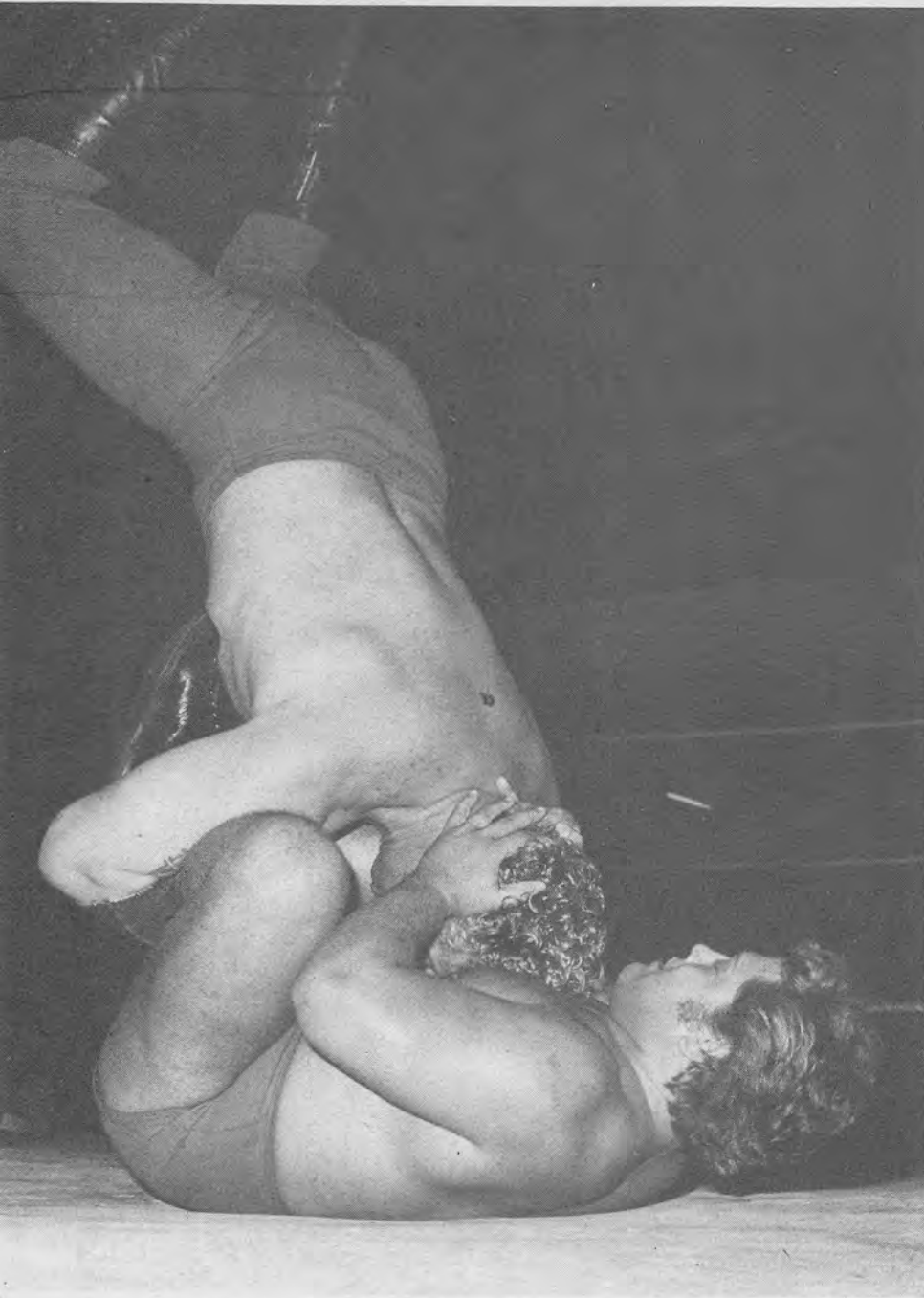
"Let me tell you, I had never seen anything like it. He really sailed through the air. It was like his arms had become wings. He did a nosedive right into the guy's chest and sent him to the mat. It was really amazing!"

Fans are equally amazed at Raul's prowess in the arena. One west



**Raul Mata has long thrilled west coast fans with his extraordinary ability. Now it seems the rest of the world will learn of this young man's brilliance as he becomes wrestling's newest "superstar"**

# ESTLER ON THE UPERSTARDOM



*Above: Von Goering is about to be turned over by Mata's patented version of the Monkey Flip. Right: Mata displays his tremendous strength as he lifts Von Goering off the mat with a full-nelson.*

coast fan, D.R. Redmon, who has seen Mata grapple many times, says, "Raul Mata is my favorite wrestler. Every time I see him, he has a new technique with which to surprise his opponent. It's really a shame he's not more well known in other parts of the country. I think he's terrific!"

Mata has attracted a lot of attention on the west coast. His fame there has begun to raise a few eyebrows back east. One promoter, who wished not to be identified at this time, said, "I've heard quite a bit about this flying wrestler. I went out

to the coast a few weeks ago to see him in action. All I can say is that the reports I've heard are not exaggerated. The man is fantastic. If he decides to come east, he has the potential for being the next big superstar."

But what does Raul think of becoming a superstar? "I suppose it's what all wrestlers strive for," the modest Mexican says. "Of course, I still need a little time to work on some of my more spectacular moves. I am trying to be the best. That goal now seems within my reach. However, no

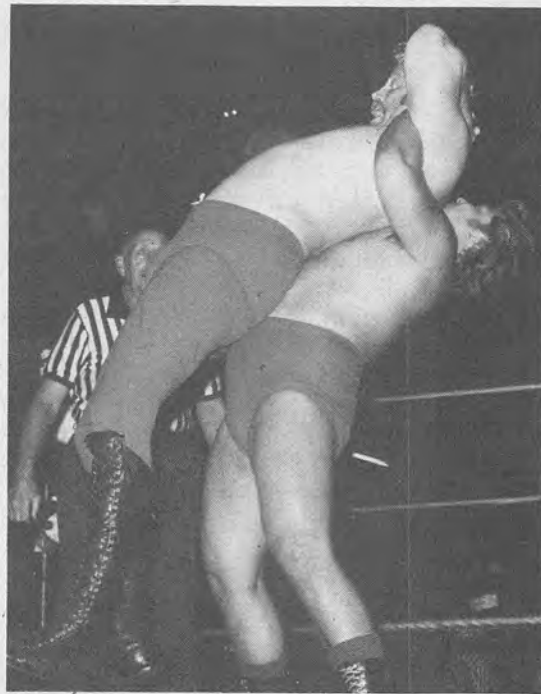
matter what happens, I still have to keep working on new flying techniques to use against my opponents. It is a poor athlete who stops trying new things.

"I know some promoters from the east have been out here to see me grapple. They've mentioned plans for me to wrestle in New York, but no contracts have yet been signed.

"For the most part, I think I could enjoy wrestling in front of new and different fans, most of whom have never seen or heard of me. Though from what I hear, some east coast fans have been asking for me to grapple back there. That means my reputation is growing.

"It took me a long time to perfect my flying tactics. I am especially proud of the flying assault I launch from the top rope. I've found it is very easy to fake out an opponent using this. While they think I'm in a vulnerable position, I'm actually preparing to leap to the middle of the mat.

"I remember one time, while I



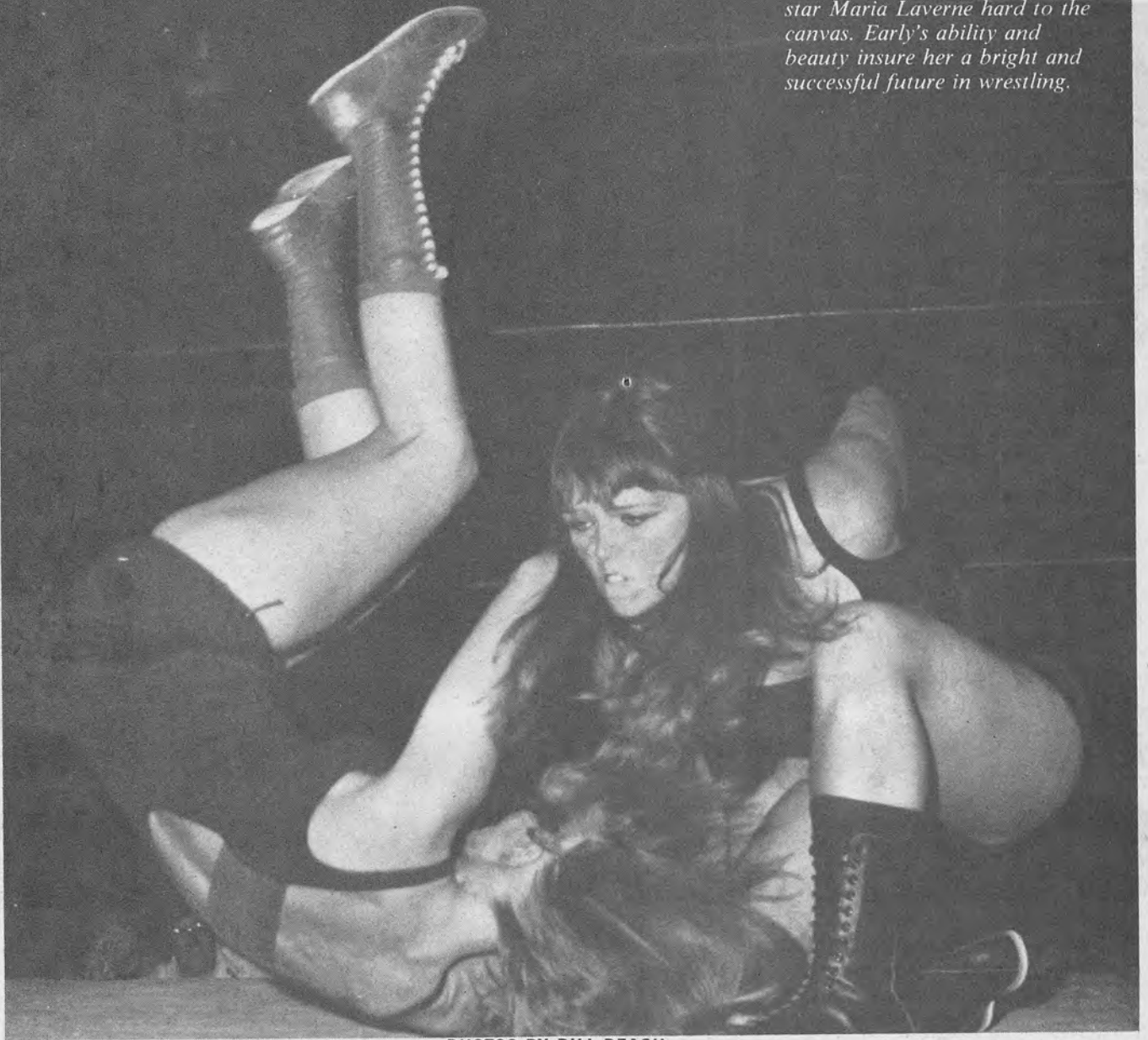
was wrestling Black Gordman, I did a leap which sent me clear across the mat. By the time Gordman got over the shock of seeing my fly through the air, I was able to wrestle him to the canvas.

"What makes me different from other wrestlers is that I try not to use the exact same techniques twice. I am always experimenting with my flying leaps, trying to increase distances, improving my aim, things like that.

*(Continued on page 58)*



*Early's skill and cunning make it possible for her to flip mat star Maria Laverne hard to the canvas. Early's ability and beauty insure her a bright and successful future in wrestling.*



PHOTOS BY BILL BEACH

# EARLY DAWN SHINES IN THE WEST

**She's young, she's beautiful, and she's one of the most accomplished wrestlers Texas has ever seen. Early Dawn is girl wrestling's rookie star!**

**T**HERE'S A SPECIAL excitement watching a rookie destined for greatness. When that rookie wrestler happens to be a beautiful

woman, each time she enters an arena it is a special event.

The woman's name is Early Dawn, a particularly apt monicker for a young

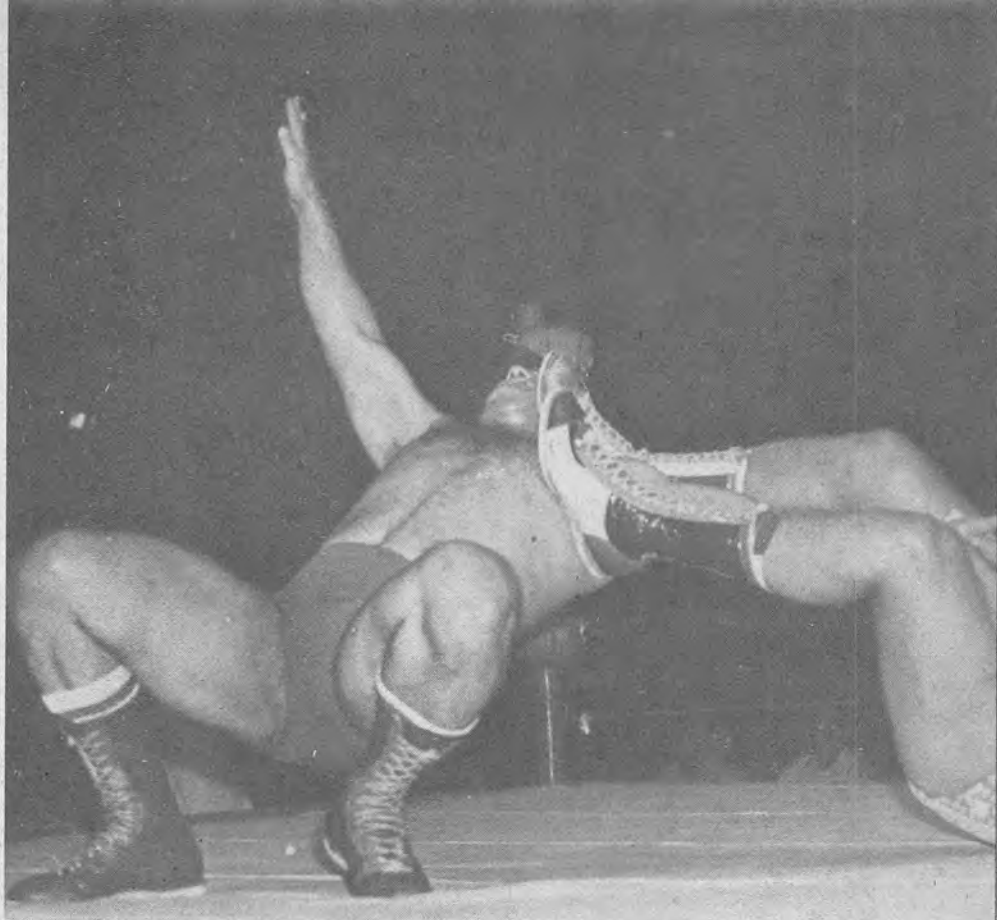
lady quickly approaching wrestling excellence. Although she spends most of her time wrestling in Texas, word has spread throughout the country about this dangerously lovely young woman.

Chances are she'll not be able to remain exclusively in the southwest too much longer. Her faithful following has grown to such an extent that soon the entire nation will

*(Continued on page 50)*



*Rick Flair struts around the ring wearing a championship belt as if he was born with it (above). This style and love of pomp is only one reason why Flair is more and more often being compared to Buddy Rogers.*



# IS RICK FLAIR COMING OF BU

*The immortal Buddy Rogers is best remembered by fans as a fabulous champion and "a man they loved to hate." People feel the same way about Rick!*



**"PUT** LOU THESZ, Verne Gagne, Strangler Lewis, and Dory Funk Sr. together and you still don't have enough to equal me!

"I'm gonna make everyone forget all about Buddy Rogers. One day they'll compare him with me!"

The above statements are those of 25-year-old rookie star "Nature Boy" Rick Flair. The youngster is said by many experts to be "the second coming of Buddy Rogers." His style is similar, and he even looks like Buddy.

"When I first started wrestling, many people mentioned I resembled Buddy Rogers. I remember Buddy Rogers. He was great. So one day I just decided to call myself 'Nature Boy' in the Rogers' tradition. And my other reason is that as perfect as I am, only Mother Nature could have created me. I don't think she missed a stroke when she put me together!"

Flair started his career in the American Wrestling Association areas. There, he watched superstars

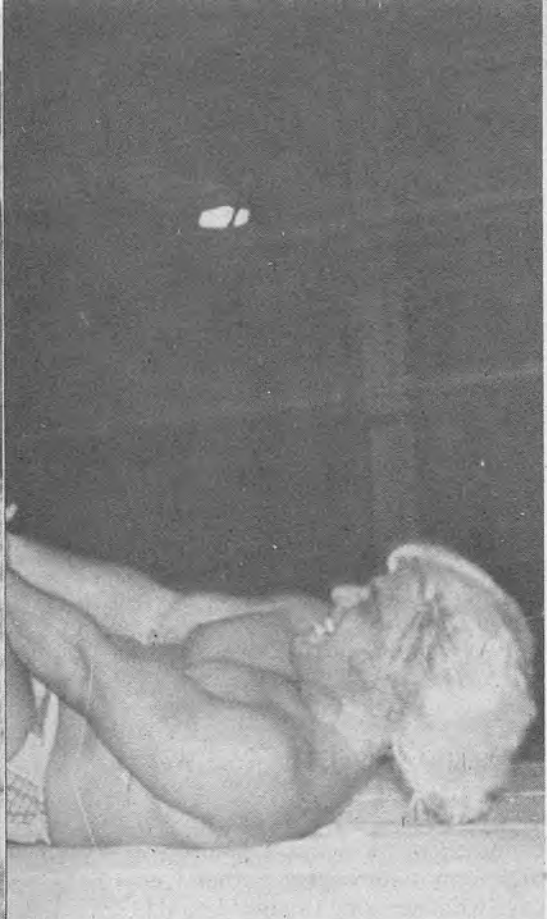
like Verne Gagne and Billy Robinson, gaining a good knowledge of the best techniques of wrestling. Then one day, he met Rip Hawk in N.W.A. territory.

"He was a fine wrestler," Hawk recalls, "but he wasn't rough enough. So I talked him into letting me work with him for awhile. Well, I changed his whole style and attitude. I let him know that it's either kill or be killed. Now I feel I was in on the makings of a real superstar. This kid will be champion one of these days. He's got all it takes."

Flair stayed with Hawk for quite sometime, learning all he could about roughhouse moves. He even added Buddy Rogers' strut to his repertoire. And now it was time for Flair to go on his own.

"I really appreciated what Hawk did for me," says Rick, "but it was the right time to move on. I outgrew his leadership. As much as I enjoyed teaming with Hawk, I wanted to concentrate on single matches."





Against Paul Jones (left) and Wahoo McDaniel (right), Rick shows that his clowning and peacock ego are forgotten as soon as the bell rings! In a match, Flair becomes a very dangerous and accomplished athlete. Legal and illegal tactics are one to him—all he cares about is being a winner!



# THE SECOND DDDY ROGERS?

**Fans are already comparing Rick Flair to Buddy Rogers, one of the greatest compliments any wrestler can receive. But does this young man deserve such high praise?**

Even though Rick has a large ego, he doesn't think he's unbeatable—yet.

"In about six months I will be," he boasts. "Right now there is always a possibility of losing. I don't really anticipate it. But wait until you see me about a half a year from now. Man, there will be no stopping me."

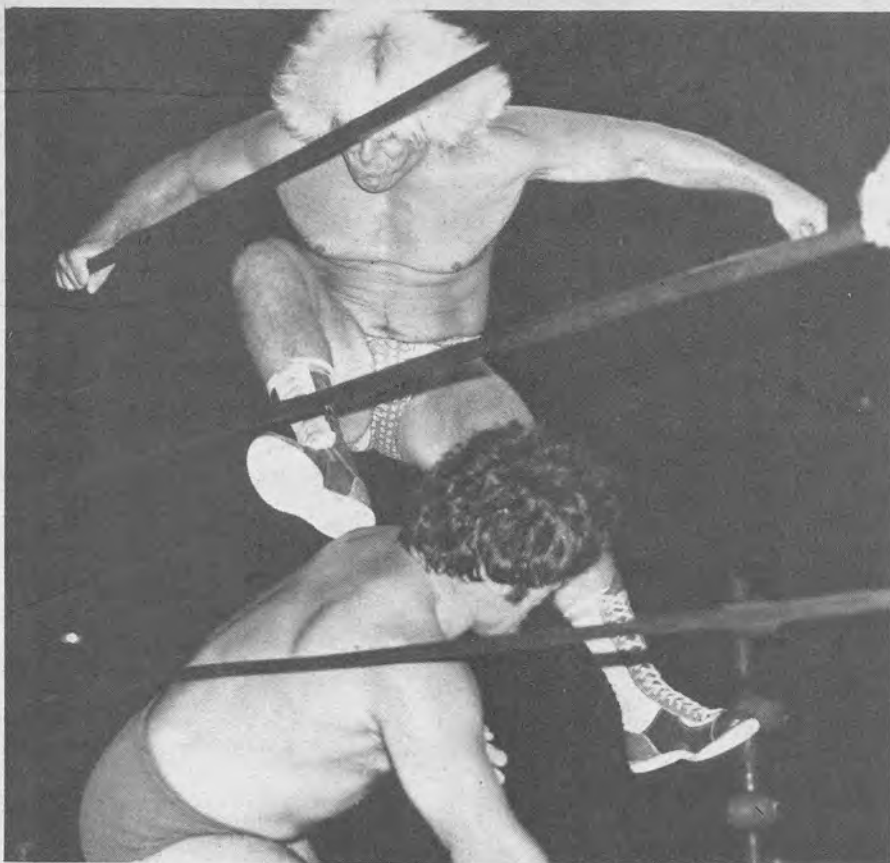
Does Rick think he's ready for a shot at the world title?

"I want to wrestle Jack Brisco very much," he admits. "I'm not knocking Brisco—the man has a tough schedule to keep—but I do think he has been avoiding me."

Rick is on the road to deserving that title shot. He's held the Mid-Atlantic television title and, as of this writing, he holds the Mid-Atlantic heavy-

*Rick invites the bloody and bandaged Wahoo McDaniel to keep coming and continue their hectic brawl. Few men would dare to taunt the powerful Wahoo when he's enraged; Rick thinks nothing of it! It's this kind of crazy courage which attracts thousands of loyal fans to see Rick Flair.*





*Above: Rick couldn't care less that his stomping of Paul Jones could cause his victim to suffer a shoulder separation or finish Paul's career entirely. Flair sees his opponents only as stepping stones to the championship. Below: Rick lets out a scream as he attacks the fallen Paul Jones. Jones didn't ask for mercy—it would have been a waste of time if he did! In his many bouts, Rick has never once shown compassion for an injured opponent.*



*Doug Gilbert raises Rick's arm in victory. "Rick will be the champion in a year," says Doug.*

weight title, one he won from Wahoo McDaniel.

"Everyone called both my title victories 'controversial,'" claims Flair. "The only controversy is that I beat guys who everyone thought I couldn't beat. My victories were fair and square. I guess you could call me 'fair and square Flair!'"

It was rumored Flair was related to Dusty Rhodes. But Rick cuts that rumor down—fast.

"He wishes he was related to me!" Rick exclaims. "I've heard he'd been imitating my styles and even trying to copy the outfits I wear when I come into the ring. Man, he's got to be jealous. Real jealous!"

There is one thing he does have in common with Rhodes, though. Believe it or not, Rick has a legion of fans!

"They hate me, but they love me," he'll tell you. "They hate me for what I represent, but they love me because they know everything I say about myself is the truth. And they can't deny when they look into their hearts and souls, they're seeing the greatest wrestler alive today!"

Rick also aspires to be a film star.

"I'd like to fit that into my schedule," he says. "I'm the 260 pound Robert Redford. The girls would line up in the streets just to get a glimpse of me at a premiere. They'd try to tear my clothes off. I'm irresistible."

Look for many of Rick Flair's boasts to come true. There has not been such a talented wrestling rookie in years. And he may yet wind up where Buddy Rogers did—holding the world title and becoming one of wrestling's select immortals! □



# BULLDOG BROWER: "I'M GONNA GET A MANAGER TO CHEAT FOR ME TOO!"

**Bulldog Brower claims he was not beaten by Mighty Igor but by the foul tactics of Igor's manager Ivan Kalmikoff. Now he swears to exact what could be the most horrible revenge in wrestling history!**

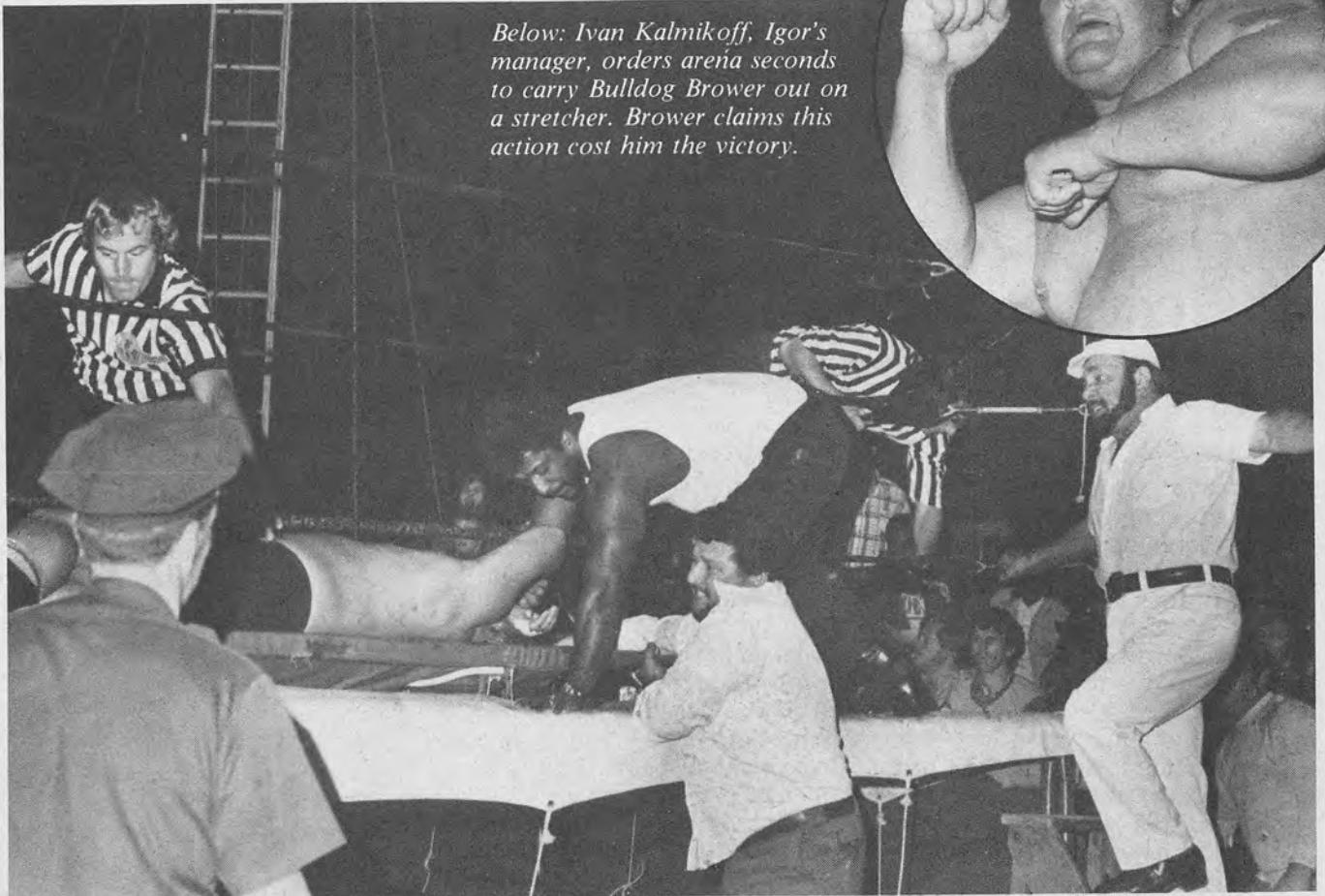
**A**S THE STRETCHER bearing Bulldog Brower was quickly transported back to the dressing room, Ivan Kalmikoff ran alongside it. Exactly what happened during that

strange trip is one of wrestling's most fiercely debated controversies.

"There's no question about it!" Brower has shouted over and over  
(Continued on page 52)



*Below: Ivan Kalmikoff, Igor's manager, orders arena seconds to carry Bulldog Brower out on a stretcher. Brower claims this action cost him the victory.*



**H**IS GARGANTUAN BODY slumps onto the training table. His chest heaves as he gulps for air. He longs to let his weary body rest; he wants nothing more than to get away from the fantastic pressures weighing down upon him.

The above is a familiar sight to wrestling reporters when they attempt to interview Andre the Giant after a match. There once was a time when the behemoth mat star would easily talk and joke with the press. But times have changed. Andre rarely jokes now. He simply answers questions as if they were one more duty in his hectic life.

Andre the Giant is an exhausted

combination of obligation and ego may bring Andre's career to a tragic, premature demise.

One must ask what drives a man like Andre to punish himself like this. It's no secret in wrestling that his friends are begging him to take it easy, perhaps even go on a vacation. He nods, thanks them for their concern, and ignores the advice. All a promoter needs to do to secure Andre's services is to offer a difficult opponent. No matter how grueling his schedule is, Andre will accept.

As one asks friends, colleagues, and opponents as to why Andre may be destroying himself, some

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# IS THE END NEAR FOR ANDRE THE GIANT?

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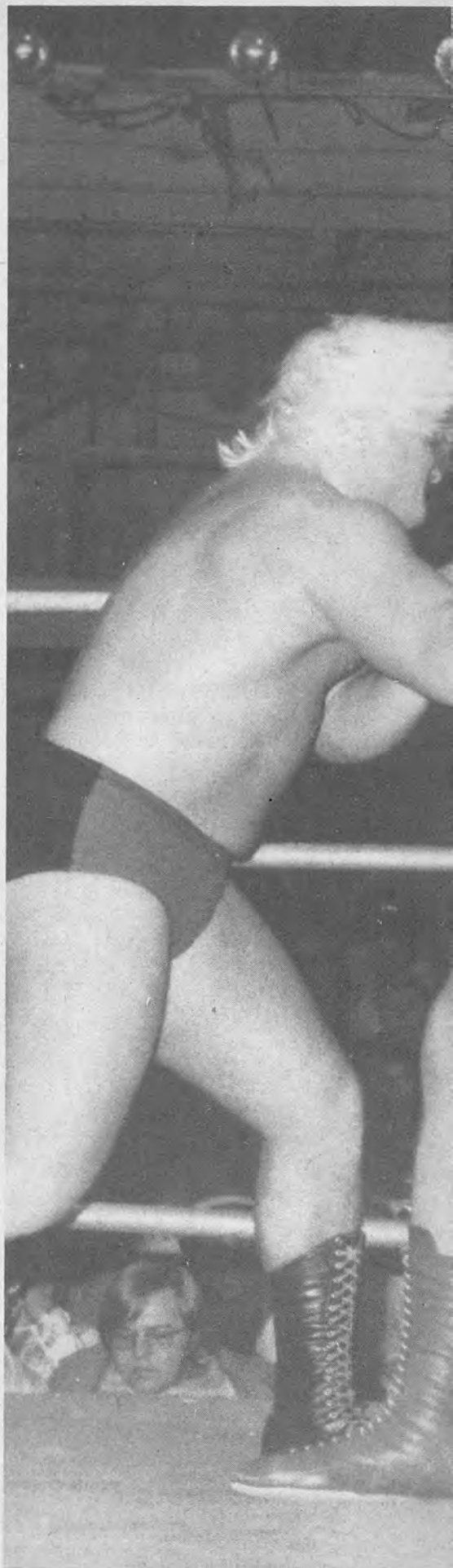
man. The fans don't see it because this great athlete continually gives his all during a match, sometimes giving more than he has to give. When he isn't grappling against a top athlete, he's engaged in brutalizing handicap matches or the man to beat in a battle royal. His schedule is worthy of wrestling's giant; actually, it's worthy of two giants!

One must both admire and worry about Andre. Can any human being withstand his kind of schedule, battling his heart out to preserve his reputation and please his fans? This

answers are repeated over and over again. Many wrestlers wished to remain anonymous. Their requests have been honored.

"When it comes to wanting to please fans," one friend states, "there is no equal to Andre. I've always believed he chose not to align himself with any one association because he wanted to wrestle before the world. He knows people want to see him and he aims to please.

"That's why Andre will only battle top competition, handicap matches, or battle royals. He's popular







*Andre suffers the grueling and extended agony of a handicap match, an experience to which Andre often subjects himself.*

enough to just take some preliminary guy and the fans will pay to see that. However, he wouldn't cheat the fans like that.

"We were discussing wrestling late one night and Andre told me, 'The more the fans expect, the more you have to give them. The more you give them, the more they expect. Their expectations have no limits, but I do. The better I get, the harder I have to work to improve. I wonder what the fans will do when I have no more to give?'

"I tried to tell him he was wrong. Fans respect him for what he is, not what he could be. He didn't listen."

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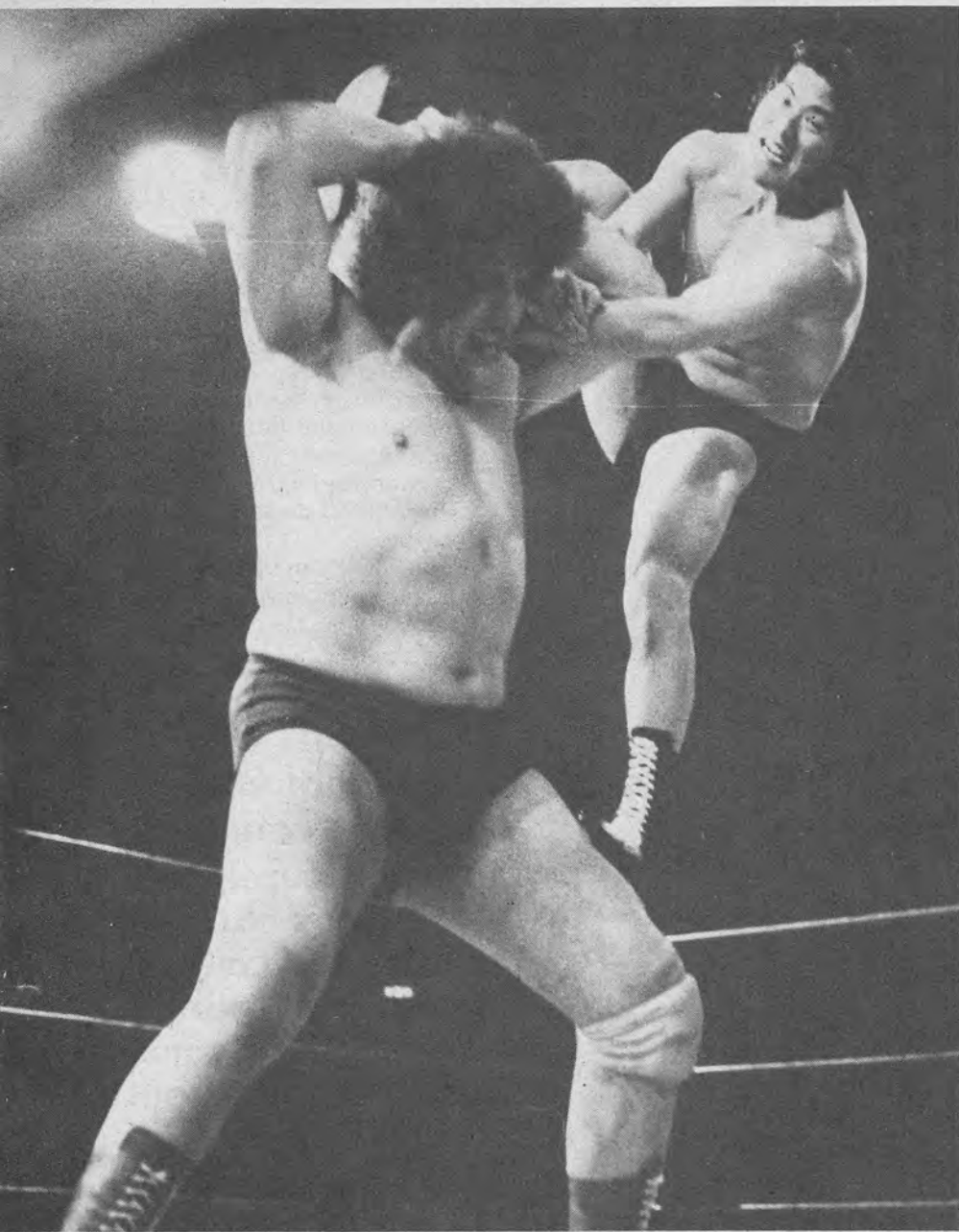
**Are ambition and adulation combining to prematurely end the glorious career of Andre the Giant? Read what Andre's friends and enemies have to say about wrestling's most shocking question**

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Another friend of Andre's sees the problem as the grappler's hopeless quest to prove his invincibility.

"Andre is the most impatient man I know," this friend declares. "He has to accept all challenges immediately. He has this need to prove his greatness over and over again. The man knows no satisfaction. He's afraid a single unanswered or delayed acceptance of a challenge will mean his reputation will be destroyed.

"I think Andre's biggest fear is he'll be forced to retire before he beats everybody. I've never seen time press on a man so hard. Most people are satisfied to do the best they can while they're here. Andre



*Above: Inoki forces Andre to the ropes. Below: Andre's face betrays his fear as the Hollywood Blonds prepare to hurl him into the ringpost.*



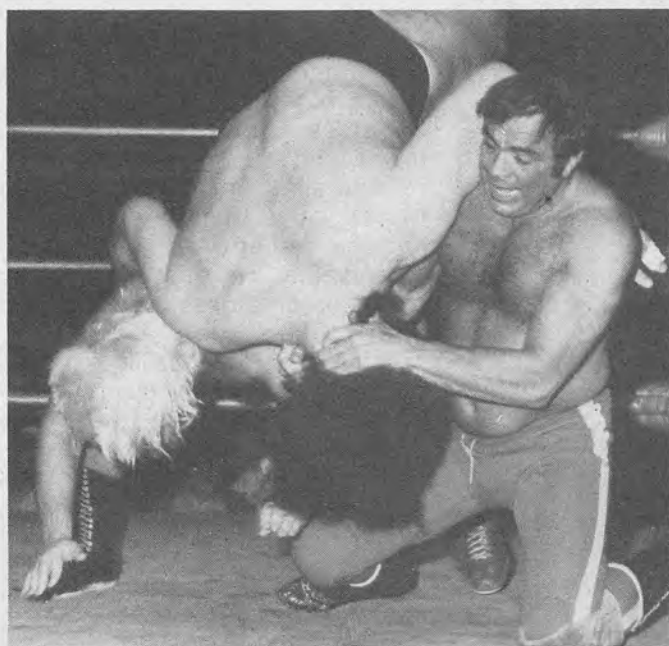
simply must surpass everyone; and I think he's afraid to even think about his career ever ending.

"That's the strangest thing about this whole situation. His fear of the future may destroy his present!"

Of course, there are those enemies of Andre's, happy to be identified, who are happy to take credit for what they see as the end of Andre's career.


"He can't hold on much longer," happily crows Blackjack Lanza, "and the end is near. In fact, I'm the man responsible. My skill, my cunning, and my daring will be the end of Andre. I'm just too good for him. After he wrestled me, his career was finished. If the commissions had any mercy, they'd refuse to let that worthless hulk ever wrestle again!"

Of course, Andre is not a "worthless hulk." However, perhaps Lanza is right. Maybe the commissions should forcibly limit the amount of matches Andre is forcing himself to endure. If someone doesn't slow Andre down, he may be stopped altogether! □



*Above: Antonio Inoki uses his agility and cunning to make up for Andre's great height advantage. As wrestlers meet Andre time and time again, they find ways to overcome Andre's size. Left: Against the savage tag team of John Tolos and young Greg Valentine, it is a tough and painful battle for the mammoth mat legend.*





# WAS ERNIE LADD FORCED TO AMBUSH MIL MASCARAS?

**Everyone was stunned when Ernie Ladd sneak-attacked I.W.A. champion Mil Mascaras. If they knew the reasons why he attacked, they'd be a lot more astonished!**

**T**HE HOT KLIEG lights blared down intensely onto the set in the television studio, making Mil Mascaras perspire underneath his mask. The assistant director came up to the podium where Mil and the moderator were standing and told them they would be on the air in 30 seconds.

Before he was ready, Mil saw the

"ON THE AIR" sign light up and heard the theme music in the background. "Ladies and gentlemen," the announcer intoned, "tonight in our studios we have with us the world famous wrestler, Mil Mascaras. He's going to be talking to us about his match tomorrow night against Ernie Ladd."

The program cut away to a

commercial, then returned with the cameras focused on Mil. Ill at ease at first, the masked grappler soon relaxed and gave comfortable, free-flowing answers to the moderator's pointed questions. The interview seemed to be going very well.

Suddenly, a loud commotion was heard off camera. Yelling and screaming from the stagehands was heard everywhere. Then, in rushed Ernie Ladd, his advisor Bruce Swayze, and Eric the Red.

The trio grabbed Mil out of his seat on the podium and forced him to the floor. With savage fury, the three assaulted the masked grappler.

As soon as Mil was down, Swayze



and Eric the Red backed away and let Ernie Ladd finish the ambush. He kicked Mascaras with his black leather shoes, causing the Mexican to scream in agony. But Ladd's assault did not last for long.

Mil scrambled to his feet between Ladd's brutal kicks, and grabbed his opponent around the waist. He started

landing punches into Ernie's bearded face. Off camera, Swayze was shouting, "Come on, Ernie. Get him! Get him good!"

But Ladd was in a helpless position. Mascaras kept pounding away at Ernie's hairy face. Swayze kept screaming, "Kick him where it hurts, Ernie. Get him!"

Trying to follow his advisor's words, Ladd delivered a knee kick to Mil's stomach. The Mexican doubled over in pain, finally falling again to the floor. Just then, four security guards from the television station ran onto the set and gruffly escorted Ladd, Swayze and Eric the Red away. The director cut away to a commercial.





After the program, everyone started speculating on what caused Ernie to ambush Mil. No one could understand the action. No one believed Ernie would ever do such a thing. But this magazine has learned he may have been forced into the assault by his advisor, Bruce Swayze.

According to a source who wishes to

remain anonymous, Bruce advised Ernie to ambush his opponent on the television show before their scheduled match. The source says Ladd was at first opposed to the idea, and tried to reject the proposition. At this point, the source is not too clear what happened to make Ernie Ladd change his mind and ambush Mascaras. All



*When Mil Mascaras is attacked by Ernie Ladd, everyone is shocked and confused (left). No one suspected Ladd was just following the orders of his advisor, Bruce Swayze (above). Why did Bruce order it, though?*

that is known is that a very loud argument took place between the grappler and his advisor.

Mascaras was very upset over the incident. "He didn't hurt me," said Mil. "It's just that I never expected it, even from Ladd. He's a good wrestler and needn't resort to ambushing his opponent before the match. I really don't know why he did such a thing."

Whatever it was that Swaysze said to make Ladd ambush Mil, it must have been something important. One can only hope Ernie weighs the advice he's given in the future more carefully.

□

**Mark Lewin learned a bloody lesson when he wrestled King Curtis. And it was a lesson he almost didn't survive!**





# THE NIGHT MARK LEWIN NEARLY DROWNED IN HIS OWN BLOOD!

PHOTOS BY GARY KAMENSACK

**T**HERE ARE MOMENTS in men's lives they never forget. For most, these treasured memories are usually the happiest experiences from their pasts.

But the one memory that will stay alive in the mind of Mark Lewin is the night he almost drowned in his own blood after a gruesome battle against King Curtis.

Blood has a bitter taste. It is especially sour when it is your own blood filling up your mouth and spilling on the canvas. But the taste was even more bitter for Mark Lewin because his nearly fatal loss of blood was caused by Curtis, Lewin's arch-rival.

Though Curtis and Lewin have grappled before, there has never been a match so bloody as this one. Fans were aghast by all the gory action that took place before them.

But the fans did not see the real beginning of the bloody battle. That took place minutes before the actual match, when King Curtis stormed out of his dressing room and attacked Lewin, who was still preparing for the match. The special police had to be called to prevent the match from ending before it had even begun!

Lewin was slightly shaken by the incident, but tried not to show it. After the police had led Curtis back to his own dressing room and out of earshot,



*King Curtis uses a foreign object to open a bloody gash across foe Mark Lewin's head.*

Lewin declared, "I'm not going to let that big hulk scare me. There is no way he is going to win this match! He thinks he can psyche me out by attacking me ahead of time. But I've got news for him. His sneaky assault

has really made me mad. Now I'm going to go out into the arena and destroy him!"

The grappler's boasts seemed a little too unbelievable to come true. Still, the look in his eyes was one of determination.

When the match was ready to begin, both men emerged from their dressing rooms, each accompanied by a member of the special police force. Each wrestler was personally escorted into the arena, and physically restrained until the bell sounded. But as soon as the bell was rung, all hell broke loose.

Continuing the fury of his dressing room attack, Curtis tore into Lewin, grabbing him by the mid-section and forcing him to the mat. But this time Mark was ready. He bounced off the canvas and bounded back up with a punch that landed squarely in Curtis' jaw. He started chasing King all around the ring, forcing him to hug the ropes, hoping Lewin would let up for just a moment.

Mark was relentless in his attack. Finally, Curtis could stand no more. He leaped over the ropes and down to the floor. Lewin followed the Hawaiian grappler into the stands. Curtis had no place to run. He just stood there, clinging to a pole, while Lewin tore at his bushy black hair.

*(Continued on page 56)*

# WRESTLER ON THE "HOTSEAT"

## IVAN PUTSKI: "POLISH POWER CONQUERS ALL!"



**H**E'S ONE OF the most powerful men in wrestling. Born and raised during troubled times in Poland, he immigrated to this country and began to pursue a career in pro wrestling. In his first few bouts he amazed everyone with his show of strength and skill. A charismatic figure who draws packed houses wherever he appears, he has made it to superstardom. He is Polish Power personified. He is the lovable Ivan Putski.

**Q:** Ivan, welcome to the "Hotseat."

**A:** I am very happy to be here.

**Q:** To start things off, Ivan, we printed a story that you and The Mighty Igor are not one and the same person. But some people refuse to believe it. Would you please set matters straight?

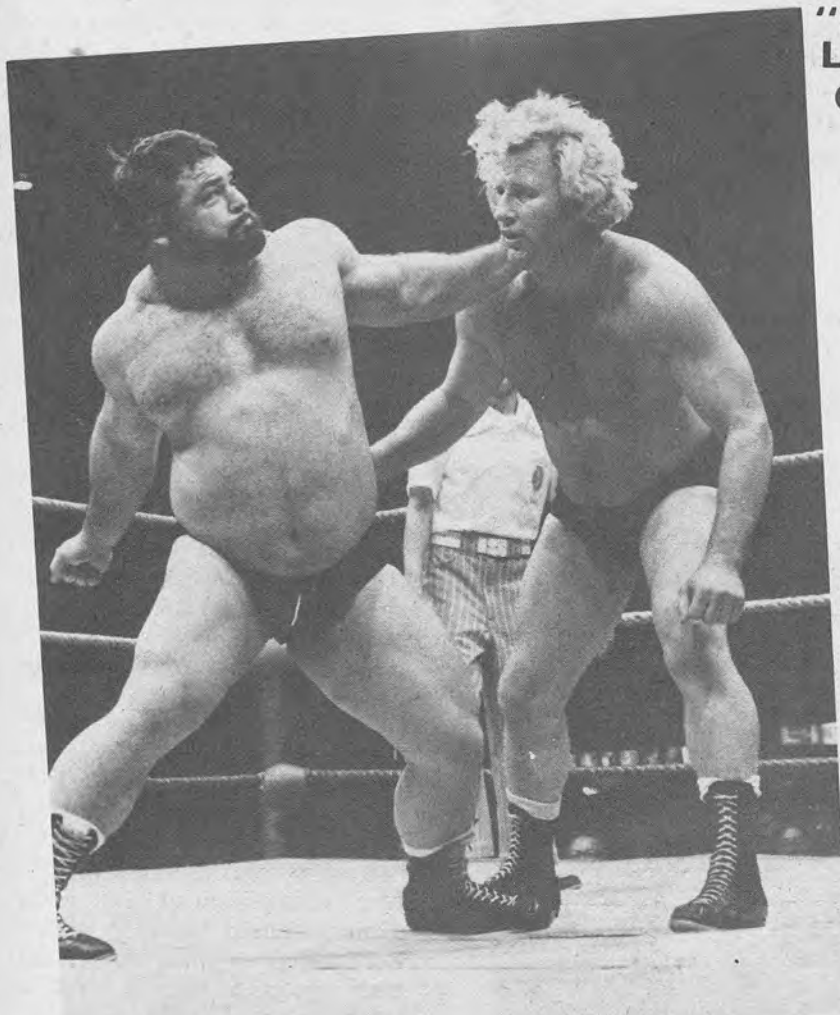
**A:** Igor and I are not the same person. He wrestles in one part of the country the same night I'm appearing elsewhere.

**Q:** Are you related to Igor?

**A:** No. The only way we are alike is



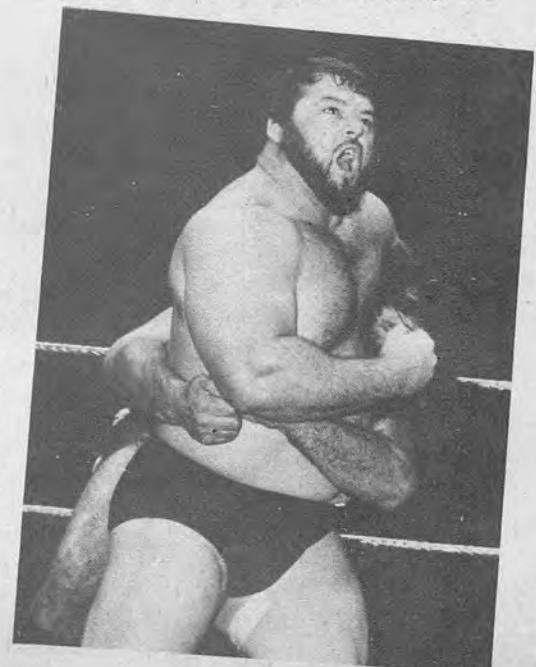
**The "Hotseat" is not a comfortable place to be. When we put a wrestler on the "Hotseat" we interview him. But it is more than just an interview. It is a no-holds-barred question and answer forum that probes beyond the obvious and seeks to find out what others are afraid to ask. The "Hotseat" pulls no punches and plays no favorites. It is the kind of in-depth feature you'll find nowhere else!**



**"IF I WIN ALL MY MATCHES LIKE I HAVE BEEN, I SHOULD GET A TITLE SHOT! RIGHT?"**



*Ivan has earned his fame in matches against infamous Nick Bockwinkel (left) and crazed, dangerous, wild Wolfman (below).*



that we are both from Poland.  
**Q:** The similarity ends there?  
**A:** Well, we both work out with weights and we are both strong.  
**Q:** Do you think you are stronger than he is?  
**A:** Yes I do.  
**Q:** Would you wrestle Igor?  
**A:** Sure. I will wrestle anyone.  
**Q:** You've stated on many occasions that you will wrestle anyone. You were in the A.W.A. areas for a long time but you never got a title shot at Verne Gagne.

**A:** That's right.  
**Q:** Now you're in W.W.W.F. territory. Do you think you will get a title shot?  
**A:** Of course. I should, just like anybody else. If I win all my matches like I have been, I should get a title shot. Right?  
**Q:** Well, yes. However, could it be that you might become the Chief Jay Strongbow of the area. After all, he was wrestling in W.W.W.F. areas for a long time and never got a title shot. What will you do if



*When the going gets tough, Ivan is more than equal to the battle. Ivan demonstrates this against Nick Bockwinkel as he pounds both his feet (above) and fists (below) down onto Bockwinkel's head. Ivan will use as rough tactics as his foe if necessary!*



you're placed in that situation?

**A:** If I don't get a title shot, maybe I'll go someplace else. Maybe not. Ivan is not worried about that right now, though. Right now I've got guys like Spiros Arion, Waldo Von Erich and Superstar Graham to worry about.

**Q:** You mentioned Superstar

Graham. It seems you had some kind of feud going with him in the A.W.A. areas until he became a fan favorite. Now he's back to his old ways and in the same area you are. What's your opinion of Graham?

**A:** He's got a personality problem. He is a mean man. Sometimes he tries to change to good ways, but he was

just born mean. It is impossible for him to change to the way fans want him forever. Maybe for a few days, weeks or even months he might change, but I feel he will always go back to being mean. He likes to hurt people. You can see it in all of his matches. He uses brass knuckles sometimes. Even when we arm wrestle he finds a way to use his mean side by picking the table up, hitting me with it or something just as bad.

**Q:** You've always had trouble with managers like Bobby Heenan, Lou Albano and Fred Blassie, just to name a few. In New York, the managers are banned from ringside. Do you think they should pass that law all over the country?

**A:** Yes. It's like wrestling two men at once when a manager is at ringside. They always stick their cheating noses into my business. The fans see it, the officials see it. I don't know why that law hasn't been passed.

**Q:** Ivan, power plays a very important part in your matches. Is it a primary part or can you trade holds with your opponents just as well?

**A:** I can wrestle hold-wise very well. And my power just enhances those holds. I can get a guy in a headlock and crack his skull.

**Q:** How do you think you'd fare against Andre the Giant?

**A:** Oh. He's a big guy!

**Q:** He sure is. How would you beat him?

**A:** He is big and strong. I am strong, but not big. My formula would be only one: I would get him down on the mat. Then the match would be mine if I could keep him on the mat and apply holds to finish him off.

**Q:** Ivan, you've been disqualified in many matches. Recently against Bobby Heenan you went berserk and wouldn't stop pounding Heenan even after the disqualification. Do you think your own temper hurts you?

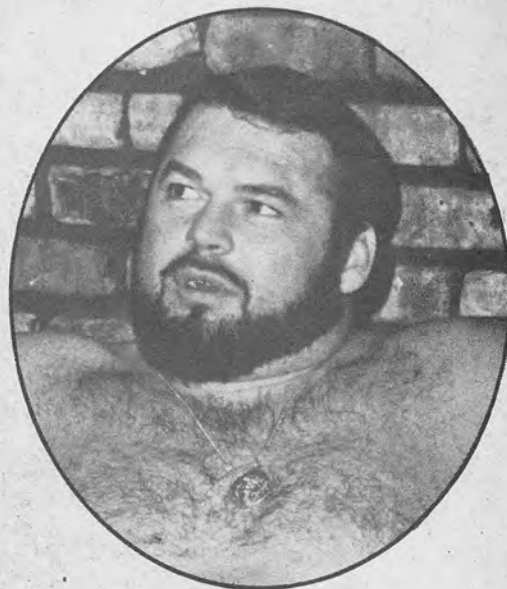
**A:** It's very hard to make me mad. But if you push a man too far, something's bound to snap. Then the man doesn't know what he's doing. That's what happened when I wrestled Heenan. It got to a point where all I wanted to do was destroy him.

**Q:** Do you like yourself when you get like that?

**A:** No. But when someone tries to hurt and cripple me—I go mad and WATCH OUT!



**"WHEN I WRESTLED HEENAN,  
IT GOT TO A POINT WHERE ALL  
I WANTED TO DO  
WAS DESTROY HIM!"**



**Q:** You're always talking about "Polish Power." The fans yell Polish Power when they're watching you wrestle. Deep in your heart, what do you feel Polish Power really means?

**A:** It is the power that Polish people never showed to the world before. But now they show it. The Polish are good people. They were persecuted all their lives, but now they are filled with Polish Power. So I am representing Polish people and showing the power they possess. I wrestle for my country and countrymen. I am proud to be Polish! I want to show all the people in America that all the Polish people are good.

**Q:** What about a Polish man by the name of Killer Kowalski?

**A:** He's not so good!

**Q:** Why do you say that?

**A:** I am striving to show people the Polish wrestlers are good clean sportsmen. Kowalski wants to show exactly the opposite. I would like to wrestle Kowalski and show him who the boss is.

**Q:** Does he possess Polish Power?

**A:** Not the same kind I do. His power is evil power. My power is good. My power is the kind of power that spreads love and happiness. Kowalski's spreads no good and evil all over. That is bad!

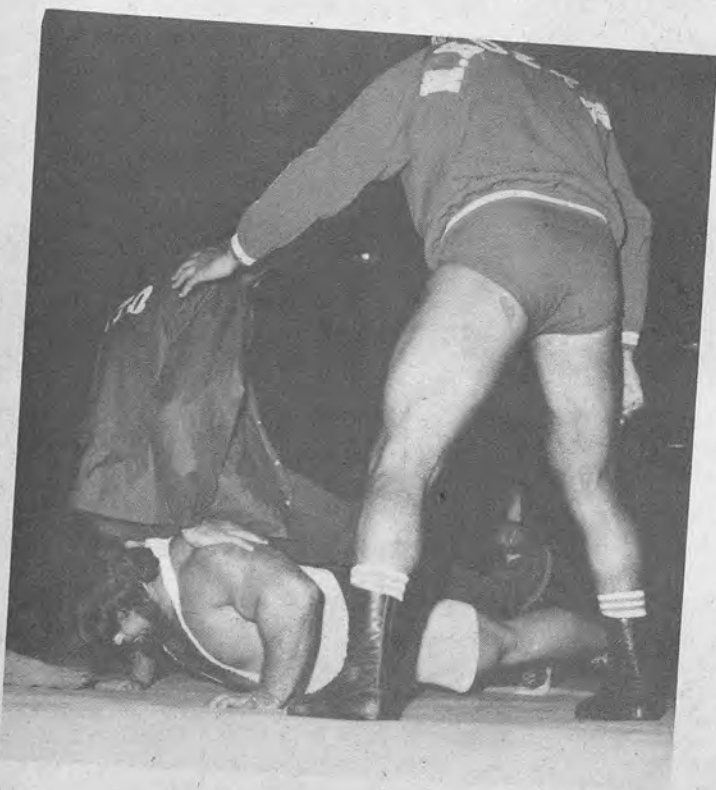
**Q:** Thank you, Ivan.

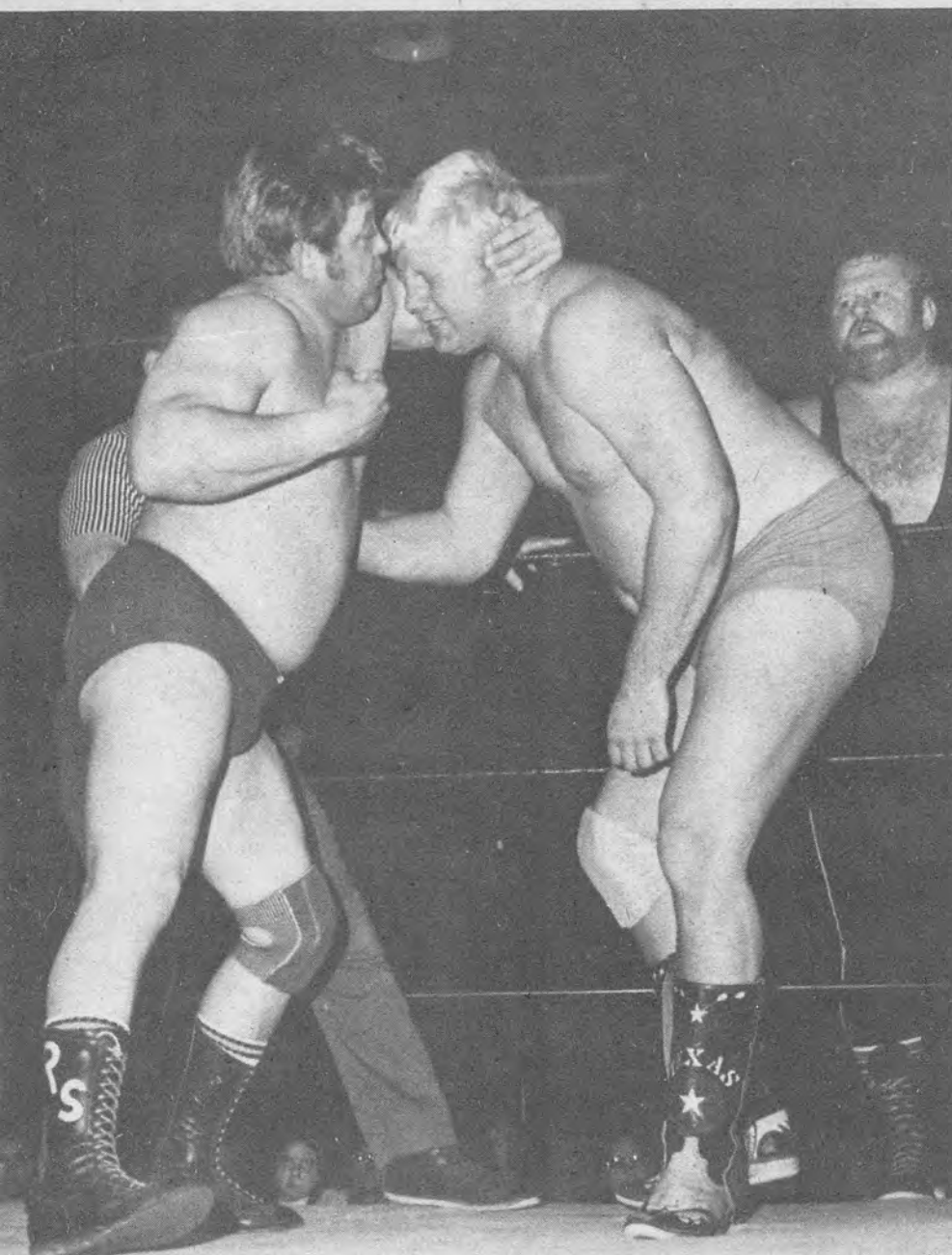
**A:** Okay! Tell all the fans I love them!

**Q:** We sure will! □

*Above: Even men with the power of Billy Graham have found Ivan a formidable opponent. It is not uncommon for even the greatest mat stars to find themselves on their knees when battling Ivan.*

*Left: It's too easy for Ivan to simply do push-ups; the challenge comes when he does them while a wrestler sits upon his back!*





**It took more courage than intelligence for Dick Murdoch to challenge Ray Stevens and Larry Hennig to a tag team match. Dick paid an agonizing price to learn discretion is the better part of valor!**

*Ray Stevens tortures hapless Dick Murdoch both inside (left) and outside the ring (right, opposite page) during the bout.*

PHOTOS BY BILL BEACH

**N**O ONE HAS ever credited Dick Murdoch for being one of the brightest grapplers around. That's not to say he's stupid—he's far from that—but sometimes he takes chances that are just to risky for his own good.

He likes to take on opponents that are considered much too dangerous. However, Murdoch continually surprises everyone and overcomes even the most cruel of foes.

But when Dick took on Ray Stevens and Larry Hennig at the same time, people really thought he had gone too far!

"He's really crazy sometimes," said a close personal friend of his who preferred to remain anonymous. "He does too much. Even when he's not wrestling, he will go way out of his way to do someone a favor. Dick doesn't hesitate to help someone, even when he might be risking

**DOES DICK MUR  
HAVE MORE G  
THAN BRAIN**





something important."

Murdoch's view of his risky chance—taking is slightly different. "I like a challenge," said the grappler, "especially when the odds are against me. I don't know why, exactly. I guess it's just the way I am."

That he managed to survive the encounter with the brutish Stevens and Hennig is amazing. Originally it was scheduled to be a standard tag team match with Dick teaming with Moose Morowski—until Stevens pulled one of his dirty tactics.

Just before the match was to begin, Ray bounded across the mat to Murdoch and Morowski's corner. He lunged for Moose's huge throat, making it difficult for the grappler to breathe. Employing a sleeper hold, apparently Stevens went too far—Moose went limp, couldn't be revived, had to be carried away on a stretcher. After medics on the scene

(Continued on page 64)

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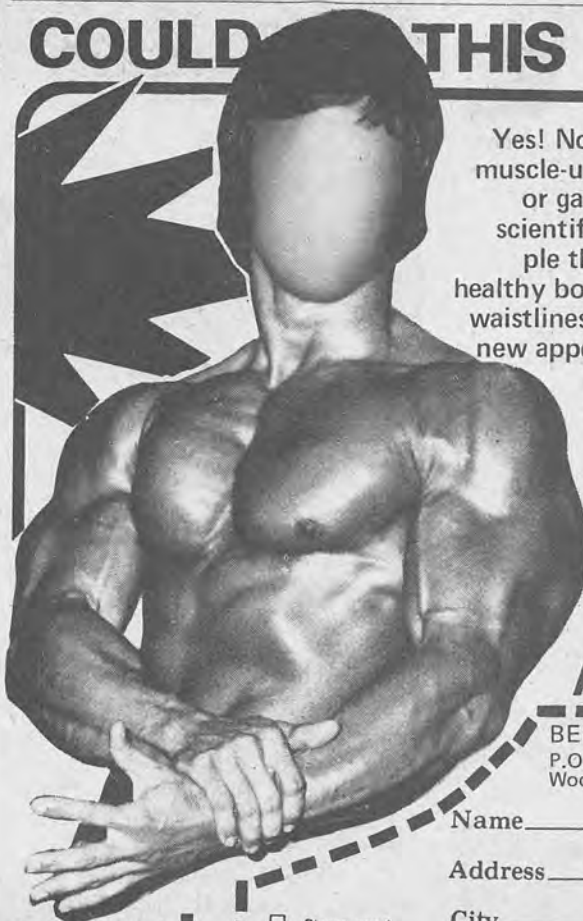
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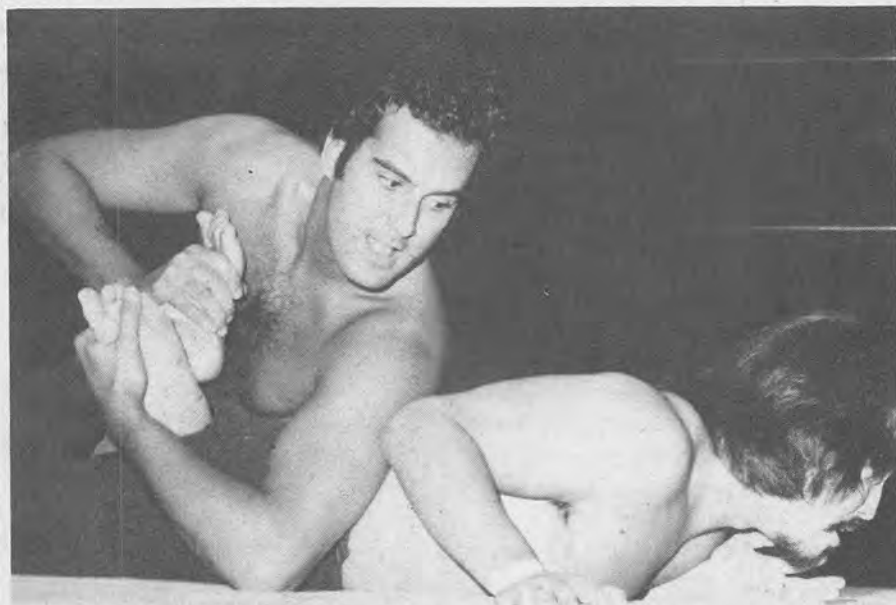
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# HAIRIEST MATCH

(Continued from Page 13)



*The powerful legs of George Gulas catch Suzuki in a painful leg scissors (above). Notice Suzuki's expression as his behind is about to make contact with the mat. Gulas is confident of victory as he has the Japanese wrestler down with a fine toehold (below).*



both grapplers took special measure to insure victory.

With each man determined not to be balded, scientific wrestling took a quick exit. Even before the bell rang, signaling the official start of the match, the two grapplers were already attacking each other.

First Suzuki rushed Gulas with a quick karate kick to the groin, but he just narrowly missed and slipped and lost his footing. Gulas seized his

momentary advantage and jumped on the Japanese grappler. He grabbed Suzuki's legs, trying to force him in a painful position. Just then the bell rang, officially starting the match. Suzuki surprised the unsuspecting Gulas with a sudden upward thrust of his whole body. In a matter of seconds he was on his feet again, waiting for Gulas.

George quickly scrambled to his feet, but not quick enough to avoid a



hard Suzuki punch. The grappler doubled over in pain. With a hard shove, Suzuki pushed him back to the mat.

The Japanese wrestler gloated over his foe for a few moments, smiling a sickening grin of triumph. But George was determined not to lose his curls. When Suzuki wasn't looking, Gulas tripped him, sending the Japanese star reeling backwards. George caught Suzuki on his descent, and locked his body in a vise-like hold.

For a minute it looked like Suzuki was finished. Then he reached into his trunks and pulled out some salt he had hidden there. He threw the substance in George's eyes, temporarily blinding him.



*After having his hair shorn, Suzuki snarls at our intrepid photographer. He wants no photos snapped of his new hair-do.*

Half-blinded, Gulas groped his way out of the ring. Stumbling upon a wooden chair, he grabbed it and rushed back in and bashed it over Suzuki's head. Unknown to George, the referee had already stopped the match, disqualifying Mr. Suzuki for using the salt. Gulas was the winner.

Suzuki tried to run from the arena, but the referee and George grabbed him. A barber was called to the mat, razor in hand. While the referee held the Japanese wrestler down, the blades did their work. Soon, the formerly long-haired Suzuki was sporting a crew cut.

The Japanese wrestler has vowed revenge for his humiliation and he wants it soon. Who knows what new method he will try to employ to humble George Gulas? Only time will tell.

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# DAWN SHINES

(Continued from Page 29)



Above: Though Early is down, she manages to ward off the charging Maria Laverne late in the match. Below: Early has Maria caught in a flying head scissors, a great maneuver.



demand to watch her wrestle.

While her fame is growing in leaps and bounds, most fans know little about Early Dawn other than her beauty and ability. Her past and ambitions have remained a mystery. As she stands on the brink of world-wide fame, it's about time the fans learned more about her.

"I've been so involved with perfecting my craft," Early explains, "I

haven't really had time to take my reputation into consideration. I haven't tried to be mysterious; I just never thought people really wanted to know about me. I'm not used to being a celebrity. It takes time for a person to realize her responsibilities to the public.

"Actually," Early explains with an impish grin, "I wish my past was more interesting. It's the average story of a young girl, an only child, who grew up to be a tomboy and wanted to become a professional wrestler. From the moment I saw my first match, I knew I had found the career for me. I kept observing the best of the women wrestlers, learning from them and becoming more and more thrilled with the sport.

"When I got old enough, I immediately enrolled in a school for women wrestlers. What an education I received! It was brutally hard work, and wreaked havoc on my social life, but I had no choice. It was work I had to go through, punishment I had to endure. I saw a lot of girls quit because it was too much work.

"I wanted it enough to stay. When I graduated from that school, I knew I had what it takes to make it. Through the school, I came to the attention of a Texas promoter. He took it from there.

"I got a few matches and the fans





*An overanxious Early is unable to toss wily Maria. Instead of having Maria in trouble, Early is now close to defeat.*

seemed to like me. I don't believe in luck, no professional athlete can afford to, so I must have had the skill to win. After a couple of victories, the fans took notice of me. As things look now, my prospects for the future are very exciting."

Many people agree with Early's predictions, including Maria Laverne.

"To say Early is the most accomplished rookie in years," Maria declares, "doesn't do the girl justice. She's special in ways I haven't seen in years. Watch how easily she executes her maneuvers. It's astonishing to see such deftness in one so young."

"I almost envy her the future. The only limits she has are the ones she sets herself. I can't see any other girl wrestler stopping her."

"There are many skilled women who never make it because they lack the determination to overcome the tough obstacles. Early won't suffer that fate. Her attitude equals her ability. Most people think a woman is unfeminine to put her career before everything else. These people aren't professional wrestlers. Early is ready to make the sacrifices necessary to succeed."

Watching Early's supple body go through a strenuous training session, one appreciates what Maria was saying. It's a brutal career for a pretty girl who could succeed in many fields. It requires punishing labor and great sacrifice. Seeing her face betray the exhaustion of this work-out makes one wonder why she does it.

The wonder is dispelled when one sees Early Dawn in a wrestling match. Her enjoyment of her skills, a thrill non-athletes can only dream about, is worth any sacrifice. ☐

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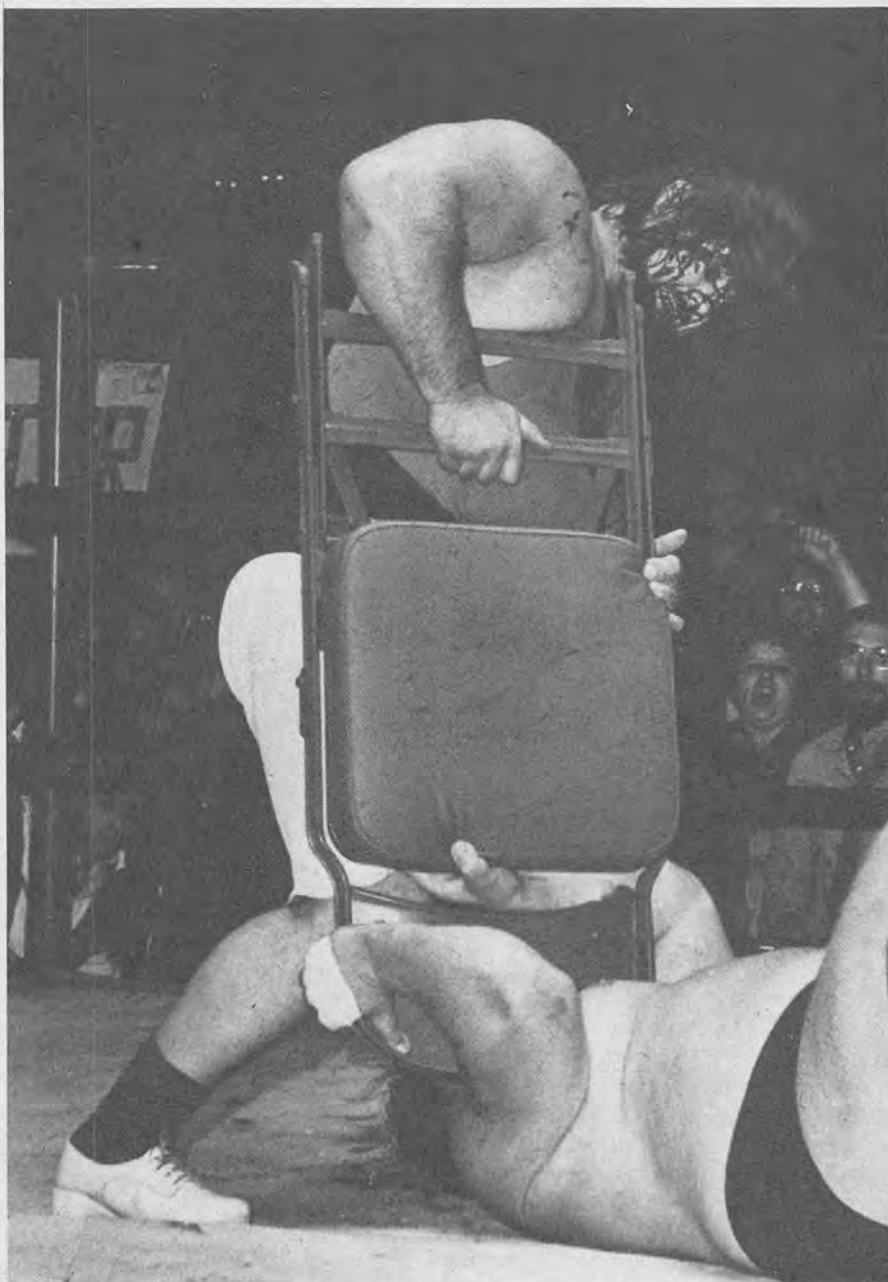
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## BULLDOG BROWER

(Continued from Page 33)



*A badly bleeding Mighty Igor tries to take his rage out on the man who caused his wounds, Bulldog Brower. Here Igor takes a metal chair and tries his best to sever Brower's head from his neck.*

again. "I was held on that stretcher by Kalmikoff. Everyone saw it! The match was stolen from me! Igor didn't beat me—his manager did!"

The match which so upset Brower was a Polish stretcher match against Mighty Igor; the two had decided this was the only way to settle their bloody, bitter feud. A Polish stretcher match has the two wrestlers brawling until one loses consciousness and must be carried back to the dressing room on a stretcher. A grappler loses if he fails to

regain consciousness before he is carried back to the dressing room. He's allowed to get off the stretcher at any time during the trip back and return to the fray.

During this confrontation, Brower mounted the first successful offensive. Igor's legs became rubbery as he absorbed an incredible amount of ruthless, often illegal, punishment.

Though his spirit begged him to continue, Igor's body just couldn't go any further. He sank to the canvas.





Above: Brower prepares to hit Igor with a foreign object  
Below: A happy Ivan Kalmikoff congratulates The Mighty Igor on defeating Bulldog Brower.



The stretcher-bearers leaped into the ring and lifted the popular wrestler onto the stretcher. Fans were shouting pleas for Igor to recover in time.

Halfway between the ring and defeat, Igor tumbled off the stretcher, shook his head clear of the cobwebs, and ran back to the battle. It was a courageous thing for the wrestler to do. It was also a reflection of how much Igor despises Brower.

Once again, the battle raged. And once again, Igor found no way to combat the vicious assault of Brower. His heart kept him going far past what one could demand of human endurance, but courage cannot overcome torture forever. Once again, Igor's mighty frame crumpled to the canvas.

From somewhere, reaching into the reserves of strength only a professional athlete can possess, Igor managed to roll off the stretcher before it got to the dressing room. Weakly, but with astonishing determination, Igor stumbled back to the battle.

Brower saw his foe coming. Bulldog was confident of victory. He let Igor

(Continued on page 54)

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# BULLDOG BROWER

(Continued from Page 53)



*Above: Brower slams an already bloody Igor with a metal chair. Below: Dramatic close-up shows the extent of Igor's injuries.*



get through the ropes and then he charged. But his confidence made him sloppy. He ran into Igor's fist. Brower

reeled from the blow, his face obscured by a mask of blood.

Brower tried to regain his senses but Igor wouldn't let him. With a tremendous volley of maneuvers, Igor knocked Brower senseless. The stretcher-bearers entered again, this time to carry Brower out.

Igor's manager, Ivan Kalmikoff, escorted the stretcher toward the dressing room. Brower's face had been wrapped in a towel to stop the flow of blood. When the stretcher finally arrived at its destination with Brower aboard, the fans went wild with delight.

Brower went wild, too—with outrage.

"Kalmikoff held me down!" he screamed. "I felt his hands on top of me. I wanted to go back but couldn't! Igor didn't beat me. He can't beat me!"

Brower interrupted his tirade with a series of kicks to the lockers. The metal bent under his attack. Satisfied he's inflicted enough damage, Bulldog continued speaking.

"I'm getting a manager," he vowed, "the meanest and worst cheater I can





find. Then I want another of these Polish stretcher matches against that clown. We'll see if he gets up again. We'll make sure Igor never walks another step!"

Kalmikoff angrily denies the charges Bulldog has hurled at him.

"I never touched that guy!" he declared angrily. "No one touches Brower if he doesn't have to. How could he tell what was going on with his head covered in bandages?"

"I don't care who gets to help him. Igor will defeat him, because Igor is the better wrestler. Brower just refuses to admit he was beaten. And everyone saw he was beaten.

"I have too much respect for Igor to try to lessen his victory by cheating. This was a remarkable display of strength and courage on his part. Brower can't stand anyone receiving that kind of credit!"

Instead of settling their feud, the bloody war between Mighty Igor and Bulldog Brower has grown worse. Perhaps it will be settled when one of them can no longer wrestle—or walk!

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# MARK LEWIN

(Continued from Page 41)



*Above: Curtis plans to trap his foe in the ropes before slicing him up. Below: Even though he's badly bloodied, Mark strikes back at Curtis!*



Curtis screamed in agony, but Lewin would not give up.

But then, Curtis turned the match around. He grabbed one of Lewin's hands and lifted him off the ground for a moment. Lewin, dazed by the sudden reversal, stopped moving. This was just the chance Curtis was waiting for. He pulled himself and Mark back into the ring. Then he began pounding on Lewin's face. Blood started spilling all over. Lewin tried to run, but Curtis kept up with him.

Clutching the ropes, Lewin tried vainly to stop the King's vicious attack. But now he was bleeding more profusely than ever, staining his face, his chest, and his trunks with the scarlet fluid. Lewin fell to his knees, weakened by the huge amount of blood he lost.

King Curtis seized this moment to



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finish off his opponent. He started choking Lewin until Mark nearly lost consciousness. The kneeling grappler started gagging, the blood in his mouth making it impossible to breathe.

At this point, the referee stepped in and called a halt to the match because he felt Lewin was in no condition to continue. Lewin tried to protest, but no sounds could come out of his mouth—only blood. The special police quickly transported Curtis out of the arena and back to his dressing room, just in case King decided to do more damage to his already ravaged opponent.

Mark Lewin was sent to the hospital to recover from his wounds. He lay in the hospital bed for many days, trying to recollect what had transpired during the bloody battle.

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# RAUL MATA

(Continued from Page 28)



*The face of Terry Funk tells the story as Mata has him helpless in an armstretcher (above). If necessary, Mata can also play it rough—just ask the Great Goliath (below)!*



"If I should decide to increase the number of places I wrestle, I will have to start thinking up new tactics to surprise my opponents. I'm not sure how much they already know about me in the east, but if I go there, I want them to be pleased."

"For the time being, I'll just have to wait and see what happens. I still need a little time to perfect my moves. And maybe, when I feel ready and the promoters want me to wrestle world-wide, I'll become the next wrestling superstar."

Pedro Morales, the great grappler who has teamed with Mata on numerous occasions, thinks very highly of Raul: "If anyone deserves to go on to superstardom, Raul Mata does. His flying antics have amazed me many times. He keeps fresh. He's different every time he wrestles."

"His major strength lies in the element of surprise. And I know he's popular with fans too. Raul is destined for greatness, there's no doubt about it."

But is he really ready for greatness. Though the praise for Raul seems to be unanimous, there is some doubt as to whether or not he can keep devising new flying techniques with which to surprise his opponents. But if stories of his airborne feats keep spreading at this rapid pace, Raul may be forced into superstardom—whether he's ready or not. □



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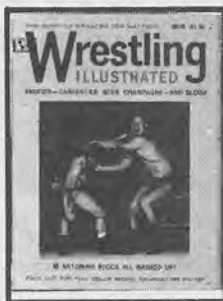
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## ISSUE

January /65  
February /65  
March /65  
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## SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 12)

of fresh air ("Inoki Gets His Lumps and Says . . . 'I Deserved It.' " [THE WRESTLER/October 1975]).

This was a great article about a great athlete. He doesn't waste his time making phony excuses. He's willing to discuss the reason for his failure like a man and a professional athlete.

This has to be the most honest and intelligent article to appear in any wrestling magazine. Let's hope some of the other so-called sportsmen in all sports read it and learn a lesson.

GENE GARDNER

Madison, Wisconsin

## HAD A RIGHT

A lot of people will be hurt and disappointed to see a great, noble man like Tex McKenzie go berserk ("Can This Be Friendly Tex?" [THE WRESTLER/October 1975]). As far as I can see, Tex deserved to get even wilder against Ivan Koloff.

Why should Tex be criticized for defending himself? People don't expect this of him, but why should he be handcuffed by people's opinions? His first responsibility is to himself!

It might be nice if everyone believed like Tex in fair play and honesty. However, Tex has to live in a world where it's every man for himself any way he can make it. Let's not get angry at him for realizing this!

BARBARA MASON  
Waco, Texas

## TIME TO STOP

After reading how Cowboy Bill Watts was sneak-attacked ("Massacre!" [INSIDE WRESTLING/October 1975]), I think it's time this entire practice was put to a stop.

Why aren't wrestlers who sneak attack an opponent immediately banned from wrestling forever. The list of men horribly mangled by these cowardly bullies is too long to be tolerated. Everytime they get away with a sneak attack, it encourages some other rat to try one.

Let's stop sneak attacks now!

KELLY O'HOOLIHAN

Boston, Massachusetts ☐



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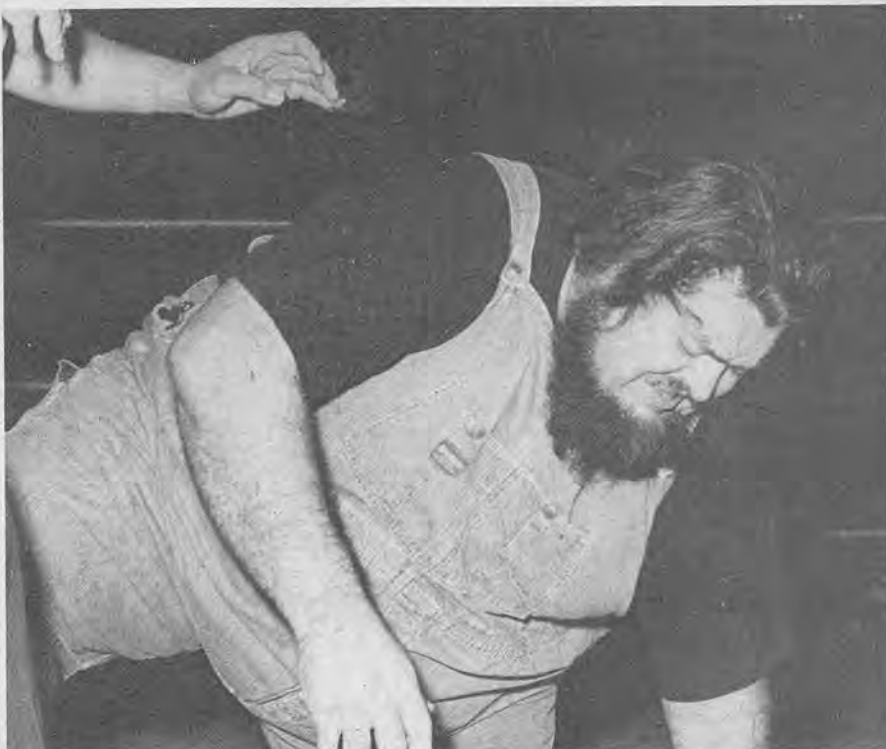
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## WRESTLING CAPITALS

(Continued from Page 10)



*Haystacks Calhoun (above) and Spiros Arion (below) proved they are bitter enemies during a savage battle in Pennsylvania. It also proved Calhoun is one of the most accomplished grapplers.*



Cowboy Frankie Laine . . . Mighty Ursus was victorious in a 12 man, \$5,000 battle royal.

### PENNSYLVANIA REPORT

By Dave Creedon

The action in Johnstown, Pennsylvania's War Memorial Auditorium gave local residents more to talk about than the devastating floods which hit the area some years ago.

Spiros Arion was there to do battle

with 601 pound Haystacks Calhoun. Before the match Arion claimed, "I will make Calhoun look like a pile of garbage when I finish with him."

Little did Arion know the tables would be turned the other way!

An enthusiastic crowd was amazed as they watched Haystacks employ some of his more famous techniques against Spiros. Calhoun tore into Arion from the sounding of the opening bell. Haystacks gave Spiros a taste of his haymakers, bearhugs and the Calhoun "Just Settin' a Spell" on Arion's throat.

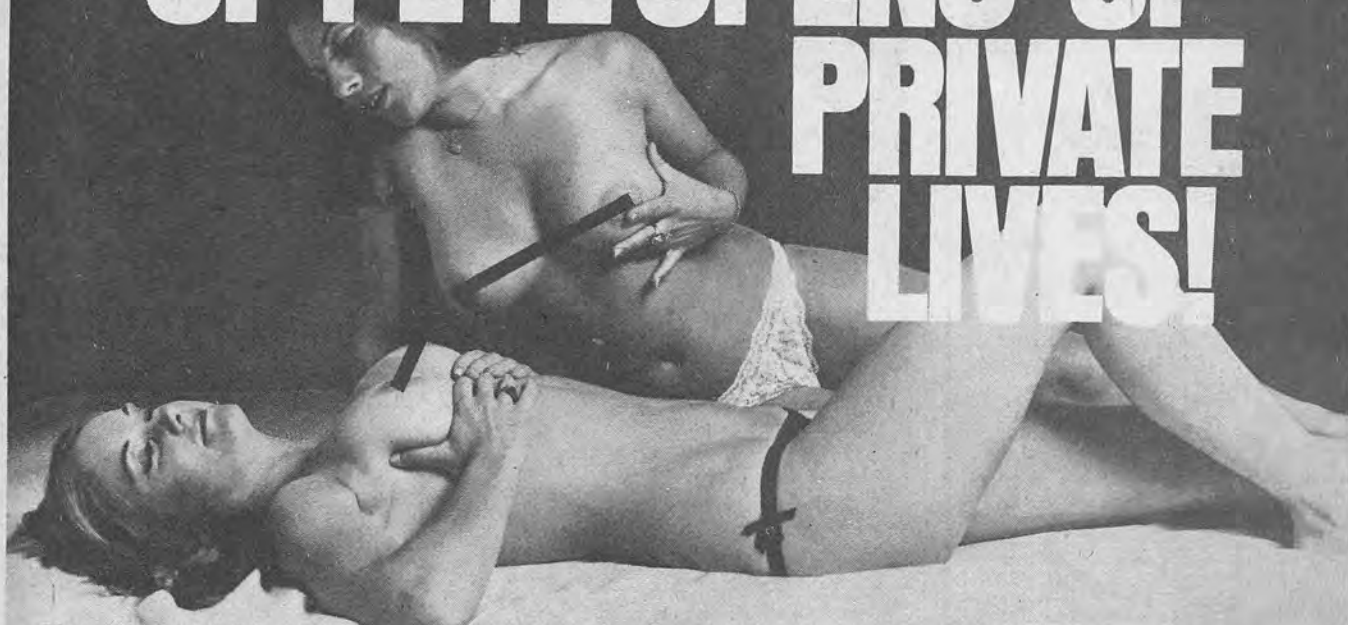
Spiros was able to muster up a rally later in the match by using foreign objects and several well-placed kicks. But Haystacks soon overcame the attack and started returning the same gestures to Arion. The end came for Spiros when Haystacks squashed him in the corner. Spiros tried to come back with an eye-gouger. Haystacks, temporarily blinded, fell over Arion, and Spiros was unable to move the hulk that rest on top of him.

In other bouts, the tag team of Irish Pat Barrett and Dom DeNucci managed to overcome the team of Baron Sicluna and Jim Grabmire . . . Frank Holtz whipped Johnny Rodz in a very exciting match. □



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# DICK MURDOCH

(Continued from Page 47)



Hennig gets his chance to shake Murdoch up (above) and kick the brave grappler when he's fallen to the canvas (below).



Not content to have all the advantages, Stevens has to use brutally illegal tactics to cripple helpless Dick (above).

delivered oxygen to Moose for 10 minutes, he recovered, but was too weak to resume wrestling that night.

The referee told Murdoch that he would cancel the match because of Moose's injury. "It seemed the logical thing to do," said the referee, "when you consider this was supposed to be a tag team match, and half a team was missing on one side. I certainly did not expect Murdoch to do what he did."

What Murdoch did was tell the referee he would take on both Stevens and Hennig himself. And, much to everyone's total amaze-

ment, that is what he did. How he imagined he could take on two wrestlers not known for using scientific methods was beyond comprehension.

When the excitement died down, the signal was given to begin the match. Hennig came charging out of his corner and attacked Murdoch. Dick went sailing to the floor in a flood of wild punches. Though Larry tried to hold Dick down, somehow Murdoch was able to scramble to his feet.

Using his vast reserves of strength, Murdoch started a counterattack. He managed to get a



half-nelson on his opponent, but Hennig slipped out of the hold just in time. He ran back to where Stevens was waiting. He tagged his partner, and Stevens rushed in to give Murdoch a run for his money.

But Murdoch got the best of Stevens—Ray never had a chance alone against the grappler. Dick received Stevens' charge with a punch that landed squarely in Ray's nose, sending the man reeling to the floor. Hennig, realizing his partner was in trouble, climbed into the arena and attacked Murdoch from behind.

This sneak attack gave Stevens time to recover. Together, both partners started chasing Murdoch along the ropes. Time and again they would corner the outnumbered wrestler, sending punches into Dick's midsection and head. Whenever Murdoch would manage to break away from the two other grapplers, they would rush him again, and soon they were resuming their vicious attack.

Stevens and Hennig tried to force Murdoch to the canvas with powerful punches. Dick just kept holding off his opponents. But there is only so much a man can take. While Murdoch has been known to withstand vicious foes before, two at a time was just too much for him. While Stevens was butting his stomach and Hennig was landing punches on his head, Dick's knees gave way, and the grappler fell to the floor.

At this point, it looked like Dick's decision to grapple with these two opponents at once was one of the less intelligent moves he's ever made. But just as Hennig was going to deliver a powerful kick to Murdoch's groin, the referee stepped in and stopped the match, disqualifying Stevens and Hennig for doubleteaming.

Murdoch limped his way out of the arena and back to his dressing room. Every movement for him was painful, but he managed to tell reporters he "wasn't sorry for wrestling Stevens and Hennig alone. In fact, I think the next time I see them, I will be able to defeat them!"

No one has ever credited Dick Murdoch with being an intellectual. But really, how can he keep on letting himself get into situations like this one? Maybe it's time for him to wise up. ☐



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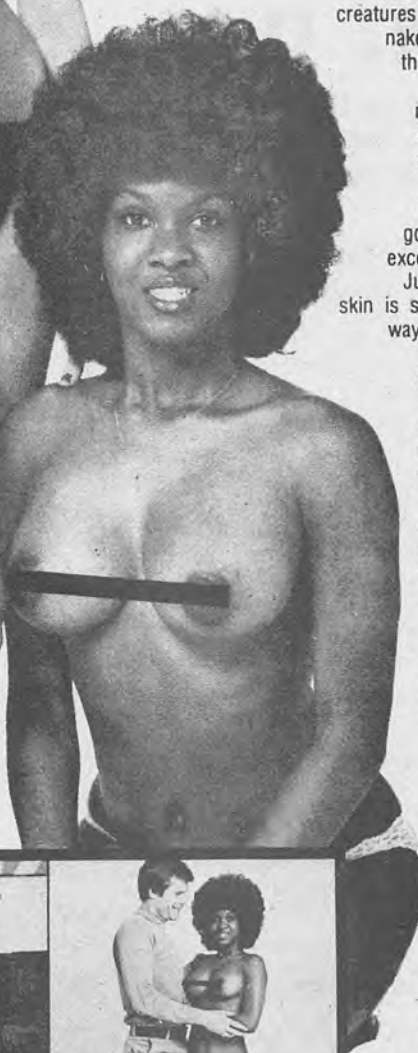
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